DANIEL RICKETSON AND HIS FRIENDS

DANIEL RICKETSON AND HIS FRIENDS

EDITED BY
ANNA AND WALTON
RICKETSON

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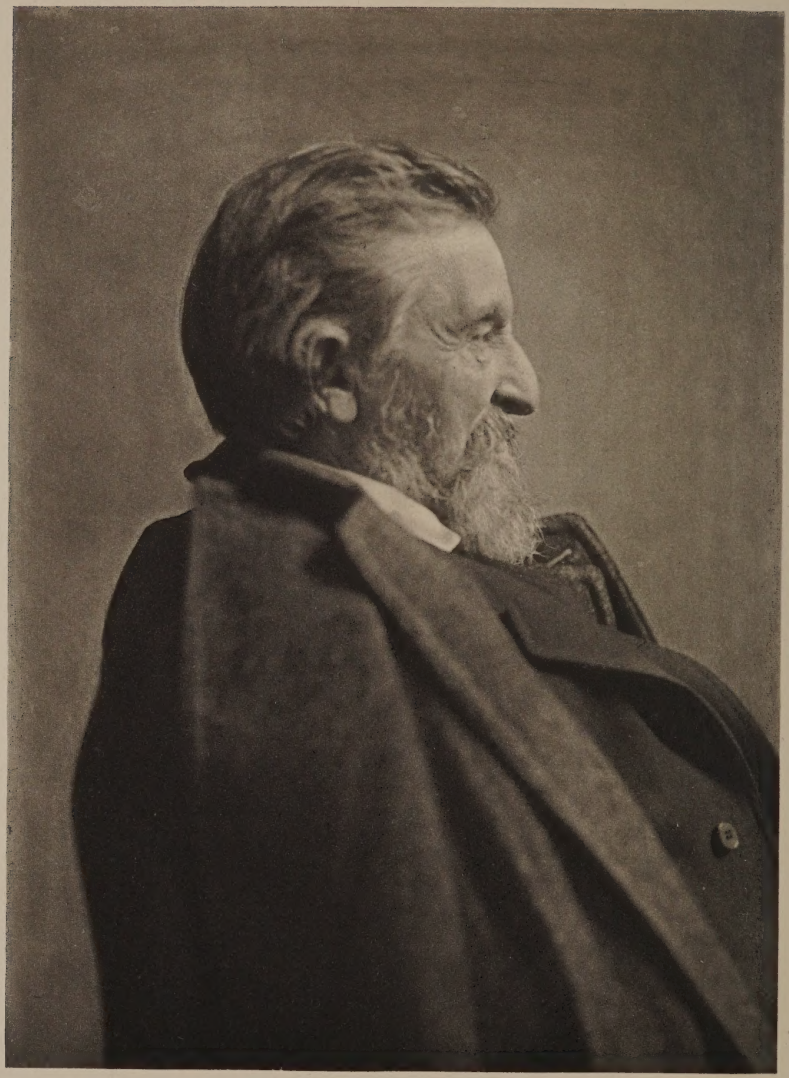

Daniel Pickerson

DANIEL RICKETSON
AND HIS FRIENDS

LETTERS POEMS
SKETCHES
ETC.

EDITED BY
HIS DAUGHTER AND SON
ANNA AND WALTON RICKETSON

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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A Memorial

TO

DANIEL RICKETSON

AND HIS FRIENDS

THE THOREAUS

What greetings smile, what farewells wave,
What loved ones enter and depart;
The good, the beautiful, the brave,
The heaven lent treasures of the heart;
How conscious seems the frozen sod,
And beechen slope whereon they trod;
The oak leaves rustle, and the dry grass bends,
Beneath the shadowy feet of lost or absent friends.

WHITTIER.

To the last hour of his long honored life,
He never faltered in his love of Nature.
Recluse with men, her dear society,
Welcome at all times, savored of content,
Brightened his happy moments, and consoled
His hours of gloom. A student of the woods
And of the fields, he was their calendar,
Knew when the first pale wind-flower would appear,
And when the last wild-fowl would take its flight.

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

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I

SKETCH OF DANIEL RICKETSON

By FRANK B. SANBORN

DANIEL RICKETSON, OF NEW BEDFORD

An event, long foreshadowed by his failing strength and narrowing circle of friendly visits and country rambles, has at last occurred, — the death of that man of leisure and literary acquaintance who to so many of us represented New Bedford, Friend Daniel Ricketson. This Quaker title was his by inheritance, and still more by nature; for he was formed in the mould of friendship, and depended, more than most men, on the friendly countenance of those to whom he attached himself. Along with this affection there went a singular withdrawal from too close association with those whom he most valued; and this led him, long before he knew Henry Thoreau, or the poet Ellery Channing, to retire by himself into his "shanty," — a retreat he built near his country house, for solitary musing, or the companionship of his books and his pen. His house was always a refuge for the oppressed, and his friends found a hearty welcome at his fireside. To his intimates he opened the door of his shanty, and there he talked and listened when Alcott or Thoreau, Curtis or Channing, visited at "Brooklawn," — the fairly designed and well-named retreat near his native town, which has now become a public park for the people of New Bedford. Backed by a thick wood-

land, the lawny slopes about the house were crossed by a brook suggesting the name of the place — Brooklawn.

Born to a modest competence, and infected with that taste for free thinking and social reform which was the prevalent contagion in New England from 1830 to 1860, Mr. Ricketson, though studious in the classics and in English literature, and versed in the elements of law, could not subject himself to the requirements of a college, or the indignities of an ordinary law practice; and so devoted himself to rural pursuits, philanthropy, and literature, emulous of Cowper and the rural poets, and fond of the correspondence of literary men in America and Europe. His Quaker antecedents made him an abolitionist; his aversion to tame conformity drew him towards the society of men like Thoreau, while his love of music and hospitality attracted to his pleasant home men of society, like his lifelong friend, George William Curtis.

If the association of Daniel Ricketson's religious society had for a time a narrowing influence, from which he sought to escape, by the avenue opening towards Concord and its Transcendentalists, yet its early impressions and its calm and illuminating traditions called him back into the fold of Fox and Woolman, and he died, as he was educated, a consistent Friend.

Though early acquainted with Emerson, who was well known to New Bedford as a preacher, Mr. Ricketson, as was said, does not seem to have known

much of Thoreau until the publication of "Walden" in 1854, when he was in middle life. The reading of that book caused him to seek the acquaintance and correspondence of its author, and they became fast friends, exchanging visits; and this drew him often into intimacy for a time with the poet Ellery Channing, and for many years with Mr. Alcott. They were much at Brooklawn, and the shanty echoed to their wit and wisdom; and he became familiar with their homes and haunts in Concord. Among the best pages in Mr. Ricketson's "Autumn Sheaf" of verses are those which tell of talks with Emerson, Alcott, and Thoreau, to whose memory he kept the fidelity of undiminished admiration: —

> Beneath another roof all browned with age,
> And overhung with one great sheltering elm,
> Where dwelt a seer decreed to solemn thought,
> I see ye now in Memory's faithful glass
> As last I saw ye, brave and worthy pair!
> The white-haired sage, with deep and serious words
> Sonorously expressed; thy quick reply,
> Thine eyes all glowing with supreme good sense:
> A genial pair, though of unequal age.

These were Alcott and Thoreau, in the library of the Orchard House, — over whose fireplace Channing had written, —

> The hills are reared, the valleys scooped in vain,
> If Learning's altars vanish from the plain.

At a later day Mr. Ricketson wrote and sent me these lines, which I think have not been printed: —

EMERSON

On his Seventy-seventh Birthday (May 25, 1880)

Gently thy lamp, O Scholar rich and rare!
Grows paler as thy years their burden bear;
Softly the evening shades are shutting down,
For Nature ne'er to thee betrayed a frown, —
A worshipper at her eternal shrine,
Thy soul illumined with the spark divine.

As spans at eve the richly-tinted bow,
As sunset leaves behind its after-glow,
So shall thy fame with golden memories grow.

With the slight diversity which their unlike temperaments required, this picture might answer for the advancing age of Daniel Ricketson. There was an unsatisfied element in him which made the serenity of Emerson possible only at intervals; but these grew more frequent, as the shadows fell longer from the summit of fourscore years. They marked the presence, if they darkened the radiance, of that Inward Light by which the Friends are guided on their pilgrimage through the world; and those lessons which kindly Nature had been teaching for so many decades were not lost on this humble worshipper. He died where he had lived so long, faithful to the tradition of the fathers, yet never blind to the rising beams of new truth.

Literature needs its lifelong students no less than its fluent professors; they create the atmosphere in which alone men of letters can freely respire, and fully perform their tasks. Of such was our New

Bedford friend; not destined for the fame of a writer, yet essential to the continuance of good writers in a community too much given over to material cares. Daniel Ricketson might have replied to questioners of his well-spent life, as Festus Avienus did when his Roman friends impatiently asked what he was doing in the country: —

(Luce Deos oro, famulos post, arvaque viso, etc.)

I pace my fields, when dawn has heard my prayers,
Direct my household in their daily cares,
Then to my books, — the Muses' aid invoke, —
Cheerful in heart, and free from usury's yoke:
Sweet sleep succeeds to feast and song and sport;
My failing lamp still finds the evenings short,
When I to verse and authorship resort.

Concord, July 18, 1898.

Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart :
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea :
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free.

WORDSWORTH.

II

SKETCH OF HENRY D. THOREAU

By DANIEL RICKETSON

Henry D. Thoreau

THOREAU

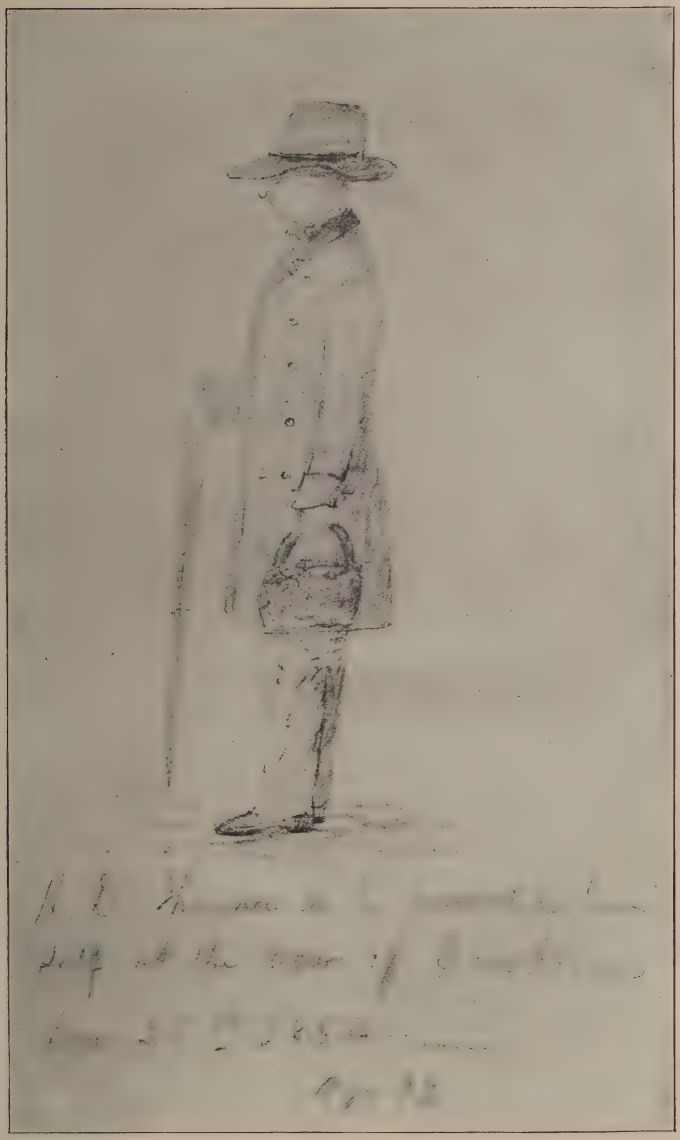
It was my good fortune to know Henry D. Thoreau as a friend and correspondent during the last eight years of his life. I had been attracted by his fresh and manly thoughts as recorded in Walden, and sought his acquaintance by writing him an appreciative letter, and inviting him to visit me. My first interview with him was so peculiar that I will venture to state it. The season was winter, a snow had lately fallen, and I was engaged in shovelling the accumulated mass from the entrance to my house, when I perceived a man walking towards me bearing an umbrella in one hand and a leather travelling-bag in the other. So unlike my ideal Thoreau, whom I had fancied, from the robust nature of his mind and habits of life, to be a man of unusual vigor and size, that I did not suspect, although I had expected him in the morning, that the slight, quaint-looking person before me was the Walden philosopher. There are few persons who had previously read his works that were not disappointed by his personal appearance. As he came near to me I gave him the usual salutation, and supposing him to be either a pedler or some way-traveller, he at once remarked, "You don't know me." The truth flashed on my mind, and conceal-

ing my own surprise I at once took him by the hand and led him to the room already prepared for him, feeling a kind of disappointment — a disappointment, however, which soon passed off, and never again obtruded itself to the philosopher's disadvantage. In fact, I soon began to see that Nature had dealt kindly by him, and that this apparently slender personage was physically capable of enduring far more than the ordinary class of men, although he had then begun to show signs of failure of strength in his knees.

D. R.

HENRY D. THOREAU

The names of Thoreau and Emerson are not properly placed together on account of any great similarity in the character of the two men ; yet from some cause, probably from their being fellow-townsmen more than any other, they are in many minds associated as of the same class. Although Thoreau was many years younger than Emerson, his mind was equally as mature, and I place his name first out of respect to the dead. While Emerson is the product of New England institutions, the ripest fruit and the best specimen, perhaps, Thoreau is one of those remarkable instances of wisdom and philosophy that grow out, as it were, of the order of nature, and may be born in any age or nation. They who drink at the fountain-head of knowledge and truth need not the artificial training of the schools. Still



H. D. THOREAU
from pencil sketch by D. Ricketson

Henry Thoreau had the best advantages of New England in his education. He was a graduate of Harvard College, a good classical scholar, well versed in the mathematics, had been a teacher of youth, and a land surveyor in his own town, which brought him into an intimate acquaintance with the topography of the surrounding country.

He was an excellent naturalist, particularly in his knowledge of plants and birds. In fact, nothing escaped his notice or interest. He was, indeed, a most consummate observer and recorder of the works of nature and the ways of men.

It was my privilege to know him during the last eight years of his life, when in the full maturity of his powers. The relationship between Thoreau and his most intimate friends was not that of great warmth of affection, but rather of respect for manly virtues. If affection were wanting, a strong and abiding attachment took its place, and his friendship was one not liable to the usual ruptions of more ardent and emotional minds.

He was in its strictest sense a good man, sternly virtuous and temperate in all his habits; in fact, one who did not know how little he valued the ordinary manifestations of religion would have said that he was a real Christian, indeed a Bishop of the Church could not have comported himself with more dignity or propriety of conduct than he. His tastes and pursuits were all of a manly character. The morning hours were usually devoted to study or writing, and the afternoon to walking, or boating on his

favorite river, the Musketaquid or Concord, with an occasional pedestrian tour to the mountains or Cape Cod, many of his experiences in which are recorded in his published works. Many a long ramble have I taken with him, and although I am a pretty good walker, he usually quite fatigued me before he had accomplished his object, perhaps the pursuit of some rare plant. In a boat of his own construction I have sailed with him up and down the slow gliding Concord River, and found him a good boatman, both in sailing and sculling. Once, during a winter visit to him, we took a tramp through the snow to White Pond, some two or three miles beyond Walden, then surrounded by heavy wood, and frequented by huntsmen. He was fond of hardy enterprises, and few of his companions could compete with him. In fact I have heard that he quite tired out an Indian guide, on one of his excursions in Maine. I do not remember of ever seeing him laugh outright, but he was ever ready to smile at anything that pleased him; and I never knew him to betray any tender emotion except on one occasion, when he was narrating to me the death of his only brother, John Thoreau, from lockjaw, strong symptoms of which, from his sympathy with the sufferer, he himself experienced. At this time his voice was choked, and he shed tears, and went to the door for air. The subject was of course dropped, and never recurred to again.

In person he was rather below the medium stature, though not decidedly short, — of rather slender

than robust habit of body, and marked for his drooping shoulders. Still he was vigorous and active, and when in good health could perform a good deal of physical labor. His head was of medium size, but well formed according to the rules of phrenology, — his brow was full, and his forehead rather broad than prominent; his eyes grayish blue, his nose long and aquiline, and his hair inclined to sandy. When interested in conversation, and standing, he had a decidedly dignified bearing.

At first Thoreau was far from being understood by the public; a few there were, and but a few, who accepted him; he lived, however, long enough to create a public for himself, and if not among the most scholarly, at least it comprised the more thoughtful portion of the reading class of our people. I never heard him lecture or speak in public, but I believe he was not generally successful except, perhaps, in his more private readings. His thoughts were often too subtle to be readily interpreted, requiring a deliberate reading to fully understand them. He won for himself a name and fame, which had before his death reached the other side of the water, where his works are by a chosen few still known and cherished. Among those from abroad who sought him out was the late Thomas Cholmondeley, Esq., an Oxford graduate, and a gentleman of rare culture and polished manners. In order to see more of Thoreau he became an inmate of his family for several weeks, and on his return to England sent over as a present to Thoreau a valuable collection of

oriental works. I had the pleasure of having this worthy gentleman and my friend Thoreau on a visit of a few days, during which time I formed a high respect for his truly noble and Christian qualities of heart. He married a lady of rank, and died on his marriage tour in Italy. He was, I believe, a nephew of the good and highly respected Bishop Heber.

About three years before his death, Thoreau began to complain of weakness in his knees, which in a good degree he recovered from; but soon after, the disease of which he died, that of the lungs, manifested itself by general increased weakness and a cough. He still kept about his pursuits as usual, and during the summer of 1861, the last one he saw, he made me a visit at New Bedford, and though suffering by night and by day with his troublesome cough, was able to ride about the country and by the seashore, as well as to take short rambles for his favorite plants, or in search of those not found in his own vicinity of Concord.

The following is a list of the plants he found at this time, August, 1861, which before he had not seen : —

Malva Sylvestris, Spartina Juncea, Teucrium Canadense, Chenopodina Maritima, Obione Arenaria, Proserpinaca Pectinacea, Linum Virginianum, Aster Spectabilis, and an undescribed species of Lactuca.

As well as Thoreau wrote, only those whose privilege it was to listen to one of his long discursive conversations by the evening fireside know how full of interest and instruction he made the subject of

his disquisition, apparently enjoying himself as much as interesting his hearers. Judging from my own relationship with him, I would say that he won rather the respect and admiration of his friends than their love. He was so superior to almost all other men that he inspired a certain amount of awe. "Why," said his eccentric friend, C——, in his own peculiar manner, which of course implied no irreverence, "Thoreau is a god!" Whether a god or saint it matters not, he was, in almost every walk of life that makes a man honored and respected by his friends, a rare example. As a son and brother he was much beloved, in temperance and frugality an example worthy of following; and though no politician he was by no means an uninterested looker-on of the state of affairs in ours as well as other countries. Few men in any age of the world have more fully rounded their lives than he.

If he had any fault, it was that he was too true to nature and himself to become a decided Christian; but in most that is excellent in Christianity he possessed a large share, and I am too much a believer in the doctrine of the light within not to recognize the divine unction in the soul even if the form of sound words be wanting. But it was in the closing scenes of his life, and when confined to his room and bed, that this truly good and brave man showed the depth and power of divine wisdom in his soul, giving him strength in his weakness, and making the sick-room and the chamber of death resplendent in beauty and hopefulness.

His inquisitive mind still found an interest in the change he was experiencing, and regarding death to be as natural as life, he accepted it with gracefulness, and investigated its approach with more than philosophic composure.

As a writer Thoreau was sententious rather than graceful or elegant; his style was his own, and well adapted to his subject-matter. Originality perhaps more than other quality marked his thought; yet at times he uttered old truths in a new dress so well adapted to his object of conveying practical ideas, that they have the charm of novelty, and are calculated to edify the attentive reader. More than any writer perhaps of his time does he require a careful reading to fully arrive at the pith of his matter, which is often marked by a subtlety that he appears to have chosen to conceal a too glaring expression of his meaning. He could, however, at will execute his thought in the most graceful and poetic manner, and a judicious selection of these passages from his works would form a volume of remarkable beauty. He was a voluminous writer; and although since his death several volumes have been added to his former works, it is probable that a large amount of manuscript yet remains.

During his lifetime, he was known to the public by his "Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers" and "Walden, or Life in the Woods;" the former published in 1849 and the latter in 1854.

The titles of these books give but a faint idea of their contents, for both are full of thought and

observation upon man and nature, and are rather works of philosophy than simple narratives, as their names might suggest.

Although the life of Thoreau was mostly within himself, or rather with the company he entertained there, as he would probably have expressed it, still few men have found a keener relish for innocent out of door amusements than he. His boat, his spy-glass, and staff, though he rarely used the latter about home, comprised his equipage. So thoroughly had he learned the characteristics of his own neighborhood for miles around, that he probably knew more about its history than the proprietors themselves, even as to boundaries and titles tracing back to the days of the native Indians.

Few men have accomplished more than our late friend, or lived to better purpose.

Peace to his memory.

D. R.

IN MEMORIAM

TO H. D. T.

O Henry! in thy new-born sphere of life,
Thy present home, though hidden from our view,
Does not thy spirit linger still around
Thy much loved Concord? visit'st not thou still
Thy favorite haunts, by river, hill, and dale,
Through lonely woods, or over barren plains,
Where once the ploughshare passed long years ago,
And where with thee I once so gladly roamed,
Through Winter's snow, or Summer's fervent heat,

To " Baker Farm," or to the beetling Cliff
That overlooks the gentle river's course,
Or to thy Walden, " blue-eyed Walden " called
By that much gifted man, thy chosen friend,
Companion of thy walks and rural life.
With thee I 've sat beside the glowing hearth
Of one so grand in thought, so pure of aim!
New England's keenest, wisest scrutineer,
A poet, too, endowed with rarest gifts,
And listened to the converse thou and he,
So like, and yet so unlike, often held.
Intelligent and wise, and deeply learned,
I found ye both; both scholars, rich and rare;
But in the book of Nature no peer hast thou,
Whether in words expressed of glowing thought,
From deep philosophy revealed of old,
Or in the fields or woods, or by the shore
Of the great ocean thou didst love so well,
And where with pilgrim steps thou often went'st.
No plant escaped thy ever-searching eye;
No bird or beast, however rarely found,
But thou didst find. Unknown Indian wares,
By thy divining wand, though centuries hid,
Came forth to view, and thou their history told'st.
And 'neath another roof all browned with age,
And overhung by one great sheltering elm,
Where dwells a seer decreed to solemn thought,
Amid old books and treasures rare to see,
And learned of wisdom and devout of heart,
A bishop worthy of the apostolic age,
We sometimes met to pass a thoughtful hour
In sweet discourse on themes of lofty tone.
I see ye, too, in memory's faithful glass,
As last I saw ye, brave and worthy pair!
The white haired sage, with deep and solemn words

Sonorously expressed; thy quick reply
Thy eyes all glowing with supreme good sense;
A genial pair, though of unequal age.
Thou worthy man! so noble and so brave!
How much I miss thee, friend and teacher too!
Thou gentle man! thou purest of the pure,
And wisest of the wise, best of the good!
How saint-like and sublime thy walk on earth!
Truly, I never shall behold thy like again.
But whensoe'er old Concord's pleasant realms
Rise to my mind, thou as her chiefest son
Will haunt her as the spirit of her groves,
Her moorland fields, and river famed in song,
And marked in history's page by scenes of blood;
For here, as often told, their yeoman sires
Met the proud Briton, and defied his steps, —
Some falling bravely for their country's right.
And now in coming time linked with this tale,
So often told e'en yet to household groups
Of listening youngsters with wide staring eyes,
Thy honored name shall be remembered too,
Remembered by the good and wise long lustrums hence,
As one who in an age of much dismay
Lived a serene, a pure and holy life.

D. R.

1863.

III

LETTERS OF DANIEL RICKETSON AND HENRY D. THOREAU

LETTERS OF DANIEL RICKETSON AND HENRY D. THOREAU

Brooklawn, near New Bedford, Mass.,
August 12th, 1854.

Dear Sir, — I have just finished reading "Walden," and hasten to thank you for the great degree of satisfaction it has afforded me. Having always been a lover of Nature, in man, as well as in the material universe, I hail with pleasure every original production in literature which bears the stamp of a genuine and earnest love for the true philosophy of human life. — Such I assure you I esteem your book to be. To many, and to most, it will appear to be the wild musings of an eccentric and strange mind, though all must recognize your affectionate regard for the gentle denizens of the woods and ponds, as well as the great love you have shown for what are familiarly called the beauties of Nature. But to me the book appears to evince a mind most thoroughly self-possessed, highly cultivated, with a strong vein of common sense. The whole book is a prose poem (pardon the solecism) and at the same time as simple as a running brook.

I have always loved ponds of pure translucent water, and some of my happiest and most memorable days have been passed on and around the beau-

tiful Middleboro' ponds, particularly the largest, Assawampset; here King Philip frequently came, and a beautiful round hill near by is still known as "King Philip's look-out." I have often felt an inclination when tired of the noise and strife of society, to retire to the shores of this noble old pond, or rather lake, for it is some five or six miles in length and two broad. But I have a wife and four children, and besides have got a *little* too far along, being in my forty-second year, to undertake a new mode of life. I strive, however, and have striven during the whole of my life, to live as free from the restraint of mere forms and ceremonies as I possibly can. I love a quiet, peaceful, rural retirement, but it was not my fate to realize this until a little past thirty years of age; since then I have been a sort of rustic. Genteel, perhaps, rustic. Not so very genteel, you might reply, if you saw the place where I am writing. It is a rough board shanty 12×14, three miles from New Bedford, in a quiet and secluded spot — here for the present I eat and sleep, read, write, receive visitors, etc. My house is now undergoing repairs, and my family are in town.

A short time since a whippoorwill serenaded me, and late at night I hear the cuckoos near my windows. It has long been my delight to observe the feathered tribes, and earlier in life I was quite an ornithologist. The coming of the first bluebird in early spring is to me still a delightful circumstance. But more particularly soothing to me is the insect hum so multitudinous at this season. Now as I

write the crickets and other little companions are sweetly and soothingly singing around my dwelling, and occasionally in my room. I am quite at home with partridges, quails, rabbits, skunks, and woodchucks. But winter is my best time; then I am a great tramper through the woods. O how I love the woods. I have walked thousands of miles in the woods hereabouts. I recognize many of my own experiences in your "Walden." Still I am not altogether given up to these matters — they are my pastimes. I have a farm to attend to, fruit trees and a garden, and a little business occasionally in town to look after, but much leisure nevertheless. In fact I am the only man of leisure I know of; everybody here, as well as elsewhere, is upon the stir. I love quiet; this you know, friend Thoreau, don't necessarily imply that the body should be still all the time. I am often quietest, are n't you, when walking among the still haunts of Nature, or hoeing, perhaps, beans as I have oftentimes done, as well as corn and potatoes, etc., etc.

Poetry has been to me a great consolation amid the jarring elements of this life. The English poets, some of them at least, and one Latin, our good old Virgil, have been like household gods to me. Cowper's Task, my greatest favorite, now lies before me, in which I had been reading, and alternately looking at the western sky just after sunset, before I commenced this letter. Cowper was a true lover of the country. How often have I felt the force of these lines upon the country in my own experience:

"I never framed a wish, or formed a plan,
That flattered me with hopes of earthly bliss,
But there I laid the scene."

All through my boyhood, *the country* haunted my thoughts. Though blessed with a good home, books, and teachers (the latter, however, with one exception, were not blessings), I would have exchanged all for the life of a rustic. I envied, as I then thought, the freedom of the farmer boy. But I have long thought that the life of the farmer, that is most farmers, promised but little of the poetry of labor. How we accumulate cares around us. The very repairs I am now making upon my house will, to some considerable extent, increase my cares. A rough board shanty, rye and indian bread, water from the spring, or, as in your case, from the pond, and other things in keeping, do not burden the body and mind. It is fine houses, fine furniture, sumptuous fare, fine clothes, and many in number, horses and carriages, servants, etc., etc., etc., these are the harpies that so disturb our real happiness.

My next move in life I hope will be into a much more simple mode of living. I should like to live in a small house, with my family, uncarpeted, whitewashed walls, simple old-fashioned furniture, and plain, wholesome, old-fashioned fare; — though I have always been inclined to be a vegetarian in diet, and once lived in capital health two years on the Graham system.

Well, this will do for myself. Now for you, friend Thoreau. Why return to "the world" again?

A life such as you spent at Walden was too true and beautiful to be abandoned for any slight reason. The ponds I allude to are much more secluded than Walden, and really delightful places. Should you ever incline again to try your "philosophy of living" I would introduce you into haunts that your very soul would leap to behold.

Well, I thought I would just write you a few lines to thank you for the pleasure I have received from the reading of your "Walden," but I have found myself running on till now. I feel that you are a kindred spirit, and so fear not.

I was pleased to find a kind word or two in your book for the poor down-trodden slave. Wilberforce, Clarkson, John Woolman, and Anthony Benezet were household words in my father's family. I early became acquainted with the subject of slavery, for my parents were Quakers, and Quakers were then all abolitionists. My love of Nature, absolute, undefiled nature, makes me an abolitionist. How could I listen to the woodland songs, or gaze upon the outstretched landscape, or look at the great clouds and the starry heavens, and be aught but a friend of the poor and oppressed colored race of our land. But why do I write? it is in vain to portray these things; they can only be felt and lived, and to you, of all others, I would refrain from being prolix.

I have outlived, or nearly so, all ambition for notoriety. I wish only to be a simple, good man, and so live that when I come to surrender up my spirit to the great Father, I may depart in peace.

I wrote the above last evening. It is now Sunday afternoon, and alone in my shanty I sit down at my desk to add a little more. A great white cloud which I have been watching for the past half hour is now majestically moving off to the northeast, before the fine southwest breeze which sets in here nearly every summer afternoon from the ocean. We have here the best climate in New England, — sheltered on the north and east by dense pine woods from the cold winds which so cut up the healths of eastern folk, or rather are supposed to; but I think if the habits of our people were right, the northeasters would do but little harm. I never heard that the Indians were troubled by them — but they were Nature's philosophers and lived in the woods. I *love* to go by my instincts, inspiration rather. Oh, how much we lose by civilization! In the eyes of the world you and I are demi-savages. But I rather think we could stand our hand at the dinner table or in the drawing-room with most of folks. I would risk you anywhere, and as for myself I have about done with the follies of "society." I never was trump'd yet.

I have lived out all the experiences of idle youth, — some gentle and some savage experiences, — but my heart was not made of the stuff for a sportsman or angler. Early in life I ranged the woods, fields, and shores, with my gun or rod, but I found that all I sought could be obtained much better without the death dealing implements. So now my rustic staff is all the companion I usually take, unless my

old dog joins me, taking no track, as he often does, and bounding upon me in some distant thicket. My favorite books are — Cowper's Task, Thomson's Seasons, Milton, Shakespeare, &c., &c.; Goldsmith, Gray's Elegy, Beattie's Minstrel (parts), Howitt, Gil. White (Selborne), Bewick (wood-engraver). Moderns: Wordsworth, Ch. Lamb, De Quincey, Macaulay, Kit North, &c., &c.

These and others are more my companions than men. I like talented women, and swear lustily by Mary Wollstonecraft, Mde. Roland, Joan of Arc, and somewhat by dear Margaret Fuller.

Again permit me to thank you for the pleasure and strength I have found in reading "Walden."

Dear Mr. Walden, good-by for the present.

Yours most respectfully,

DANIEL RICKETSON.

HENRY D. THOREAU, ESQ.

CONCORD, October 1, 1854.

DEAR SIR: — I had duly received your very kind and frank letter, but delayed to answer it thus long, because I have little skill as a correspondent, and wished to send you something more than my thanks. I was gratified by your prompt and hearty acceptance of my book. Yours is the only word of greeting I am likely to receive from a dweller in the woods like myself, from where the whippoorwill and cuckoo are heard, and there are better than moral clouds drifting over, and real breezes blow.

Your account excites in me a desire to see the

Middleboro' ponds, of which I had already heard somewhat; as also of some very beautiful ponds on the Cape, in Harwich, I think, near which I once passed. I have sometimes also thought of visiting that remnant of *our* Indians still living near you. But then, you know, there is nothing like one's native fields and lakes. The best news you send me is, not that Nature with you is so fair and genial, but that there is one there who likes her so well. That proves all that was asserted.

Homer, of course, you include in your list of lovers of Nature; and, by the way, let me mention here, — for this is my thunder "lately," — William Gilpin's long series of books on the picturesque, with their illustrations. If it chances that you have not met with these, I cannot just now frame a better wish than that you may one day derive as much pleasure from the inspection of them as I have.

Much as you have told me of yourself, you have still, I think, a little advantage of me in this correspondence, for I have told you still more in my book. You have therefore the broadest mark to fire at.

A young English author, Thomas Cholmondeley, is just now waiting for me to take a walk with him, therefore excuse this very barren note from,

Yours, hastily at last,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

BROOKLAWN, NEAR NEW BEDFORD,
Oct. 12th, 1854.

DEAR MR. WALDEN, — Your long delayed, but very acceptable acknowledgment of the 1st inst. came

duly to hand. It requires no answer, and I trust you will not esteem this as such. I simply wish to say, that it will afford me pleasure to show you the Middleborough ponds, as well as the other Indian water spoken of by you, which I conclude to be what is called "Wakeebe Pond," at Mashpee near Sandwich.

Since I first wrote you my rough board shanty, which I then inhabited and from which I now write, has been partially forsaken, thro' the house of which I spoke to you as being built, having been completed and my family moved into it; so the shanty is somewhat shorn of its beams to the public or vulgar eye at least, but none the less prized by me. Here I spend a considerable part of my time in study and meditation, and here I also entertain my best and most welcome friends. Now, friend Walden, if it should be agreeable to you to leave home at this pleasant season, I shall be happy to receive you as my guest. Making my farm, which lies about three miles north of New Bedford, headquarters, we can sally forth into the adjoining country — to the fine ponds in question and visit other objects of interest hitherward. I am just now quite busily engaged in the improvement of the grounds near my house, but expect to conclude them by the end of next week, when, should it meet your pleasure, I shall be very happy to see you here.

I am quite a *tramper* as well as yourself, but have horse-flesh and carriages at hand if preferable, which certainly for long distances, with all my antediluvian taste, I deem it to be.

Perhaps your young English friend and author, Mr. Cholmondeley, would like to accompany you, should you conclude to come. If so, please extend the invitation to him should you deem it proper.

I do not wish to push matters at all, but am of the opinion, if you are not too *learned*, we shall affiliate nicely in our rustic feelings — at any rate it will do no harm to try.

Your short and hastily written note embarrasses me, and I hardly know whether it best or no to send what I have now written, and so conclude, whether this shall reach you or not,

Your friend and fellow-worshipper at
Nature's great shrine,
DANIEL RICKETSON.

CONCORD, MASS., Dec. 19, 1854.

DEAR SIR, — I wish to thank you for your sympathy. I had counted on seeing you when I came to New Bedford, though I did not know exactly how near to it you permanently dwelt ; therefore I gladly accept your invitation to stop at your house.

I am going to lecture at Nantucket the 28th, and as I suppose I must improve the earliest opportunity to get there from New Bedford, I will endeavor to come on Monday that I may see yourself and New Bedford before my lecture.

I should like right well to see your ponds, but that is hardly to be thought of at present. I fear that it is impossible for me to combine such things with the business of lecturing. You cannot serve

God and mammon. However, perhaps I shall have time to see something of your country. I am aware that you have not so much snow as we; there has been excellent sleighing here ever since the 5th ult.

Mr. Cholmondeley has left us, so that I shall come alone.

Will you be so kind as to warn Mr. Mitchell that I accept at once his invitation to lecture on the 26th of this month, for I do not know that he has got my letter.

Excuse this short note, from

Yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

H. D. THOREAU.

DEAR SIR, — Yours of the 19th came to hand this evening. I shall therefore look for you on Monday next.

My farm is three miles north of New Bedford. Say to the conductor to leave you at the Tarkiln Hill station, where I or some of my folks will be in readiness for you on the arrival of the evening train. Should you intend coming earlier in the day, please inform me in time.

I will get word to the Committee of the N. B. Lyceum, as you desire.

If I do not hear from you again, I shall prepare for your arrival as before.

In the meantime, I remain,

Yours very truly,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

BROOKLAWN, NEAR NEW BEDFORD,
Wednesday Eve'g, Dec. 20, '54.

Shanty, Brooklawn,
Thursday p. m., Jan. 4, 1855.

Dear Walden, — We should be glad to hear of your safe arrival home from your "perils by land and by flood," and as we are not likely to know of this unless you receive a strong hint, I just drop a line for that end.

Your visit, short as it was, gave us all at Brooklawn much satisfaction.

I should be glad to have you come again next summer and *cruise* around with me.

I regret I was unusually unwell when you were here, as you undoubtedly perceived by my complaints.

I am just starting for a walk, and as I expect to pass our village post-office, thought it a good time to write you.

I trust you and your comrade Channing will have many good times this winter.

I may possibly drop in on you for a few hours at the end of this month, when I expect to be in Boston.

Excuse haste.

Yours very truly,
Daniel Ricketson.

P. S. Mrs. R. and children sent kind regards.

Concord, Mass., Jan. 6, 1855.

Mr. Ricketson, — I am pleased to hear from the shanty whose inside and occupant I have seen. I had a very pleasant time at Brooklawn, as you

know, — and thereafter at Nantucket. I was obliged to pay the usual tribute to the sea, but it was more than made up to me by the hospitality of the Nantucketers. Tell Arthur that I can now compare notes with him, for though I went neither before nor behind the mast, since we had n't any — I went with my head hanging over the side all the way.

In spite of all my experience, I persisted in reading to the Nantucket people the lecture which I read at New Bedford, and I found them to be the very audience for me. I got home Friday night, after being lost in the fog off Hyannis.

I have not yet found a new jack-knife, but I had a glorious skating with Channing the other day, on the skates found long ago.

Mr. Cholmondeley sailed for England direct, in the America, on the third, after spending a night with me. He thinks even to go to the East and enlist.

Last night I returned from lecturing in Worcester.

I shall be glad to see you when you come to Boston, as will also my mother and sister, who know something about you as an abolitionist. Come directly to our house.

Please remember me to Mrs. Ricketson, and also to the young folks.

Yours,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

SHANTY, BROOKLAWN,
9 Jan., '55.

DEAR WALDEN, — I have just received your very welcome reply. I am also happy to learn of your

safe arrival home, and was much amused by your account of your voyage to Nantucket — also that you found an appreciative audience there.

You address me as Mr. Ricketson. What did I do while you were here to warrant so much deference — I pass for a rather aristocratic man among *big* folk, but did n't suppose you knew it! You should have addressed "Dear Brooklawn." Johnson in his Tour to the Hebrides says they have a custom, in those isles, of giving their names to their chieftains or owners — as Col. Rasay, Much, etc., of which they are the Lairds. You are the true and only Laird of Walden, and as such I address you. You certainly can show a better title to Walden Manor than any other. It is just as we lawyers say, and you hold the *fee*. You did n't think of finding such knowing folks this way, altho you had travelled a good deal in Concord.

By the way, I have heard several sensible people speak well of your lecture before the New Bedford Lyceum, but conclude it was not generally understood.

My son Arthur and I have begun a series of pilgrimages to old farmhouses — we don't notice any short of a hundred years old.

I am much obliged to you and your mother for your kind invitation. My intention is to attend the Anti-slavery meetings in Boston, Wednesday and Thursday, 24th and 25th this month, and shall endeavor to get up to Concord for part of a day.

I wish you would come to Boston at that time. You will find me at the Tremont House, where I shall hope to see you.

Mrs. Ricketson and the "young folks" wish to be kindly remembered to you.

I have had a present of a jack-knife *found* upon a stick of timber in an old house, "built in" and supposed to have been left there by the carpenter. The house is over one hundred years old, and the knife is very *curious*.

So I conclude this rambling epistle,

Yours exceedingly,

"MR. RICKETSON."

Present my compliments to Mr. Channing.

BROOKLAWN, N. BEDFORD,
26 Jan., 1855.

DEAR SIR, — I fully intended to have gone to Boston yesterday; but not being very well, deferred it until to-day, and now we are visited by a severe snowstorm, so that I fear the railway track may be obstructed. I shall not, therefore, be able to reach Concord this time. My only fear is that you may have gone to Boston in expectation of meeting me there; but as I have not heard from you to this effect I have no very strong reason to think so, and hope that you have not.

I should like very much to see Concord and its environs with the Laird of Walden, and hope at no very distant time to do so, should it meet his plea-

sure. I hope also to see your lordship again here, and to visit with you some of our rural retreats.

Yours,

D. Ricketson.

H. D. Thoreau, Esq.,
Concord, Mass.

Concord, February 1st, 1855.

Dear Sir, — I supposed, as I did not see you on the 24th or 25th, that some track or other was obstructed, but the solid earth still holds together between New Bedford and Concord, and I trust that as this time you stayed away, you may live to come another day.

I did not go to Boston, for with regard to that place, I sympathize with one of my neighbors, an old man, who has not been there since the last war, when he was compelled to go — No, I have a real genius for staying at home.

I have been looking of late at Bewick's tailpieces in the "Birds" — all they have of him at Harvard. Why will he be a little vulgar at times?

Yesterday I made an excursion up our river — skated some thirty miles in a few hours, if you will believe it. So with reading and writing and skating the night comes round again.

Yours,

Henry D. Thoreau.

Brooklawn, Sunday P. M.,
Sept. 23d, 1855.

Dear Thoreau, — Here am I at home again seated in my Shanty. My mind is constantly reverting to

the pleasant little visit I made you, and so I thought I would sit down and write you.

I regret exceedingly that I was so interrupted in my enjoyment while at Concord by my "aches and pains." My head troubled me until I had got within about 20 miles of home, when the pain passed off and my spirits began to revive. I hope that your walks, &c., with me will not harm you and that you will soon regain your usual health and strength, which I trust the cooler weather will favor; would advise you not to doctor, but just use your own good sense. I should have insisted more on your coming on with me had I not felt so ill and in such actual pain the day I left — but I want you to come before the weather gets uncomfortably cool. I feel much your debtor, for through you and your Walden I have found my hopes and strength in those matters which I had before found none to sympathize with. You have more than any other to me discovered the true secret of living comfortably in this world, and I hope more and more to be able to put it into practice, in the mean time you will be able to extend your pity and charity. You are the only "millionaire" among my acquaintance. I have heard of people being "independently rich," but you are the only one I have ever had the honor of knowing.

How charmingly you, Channing, and I dovetailed together! Few men smoke such pipes as we did — the real Calumet — the tobacco that we smoked was free labor produce. I have n't lost sight of Solon Hosmer, the wisest looking man in Concord, and a

real "*feelosopher*"! I want you to see him and tell him not to take down the old house, where the *feelosofers met.* I think I should like to have the large chamber, for an occasional sojourn to Concord. It might be easily tinkered up so as to be a comfortable roost for a *feelosofer* — a few old chairs, a table, bed, &c., would be all-sufficient, then you and C. could come over in your punt and rusticate. What think of it? In the mean time come down to Brooklawn, and look about with me. As you are a little under the weather, we will make our peregrinations with horse and wagon.

With much regard to Channing and my kind remembrances to your parents and sister, I remain,

Yours very truly,

D'L RICKETSON.

P. S. Please come by Saturday next, as the weather is getting cool. I would like to have Channing to come with you. Please invite him from me. You can wear your old clothes here.

CONCORD, September 27, 1855.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I am sorry that you were obliged to leave Concord without seeing more of it, — its river and woods, and various pleasant walks, and its worthies. I assure you that I am none the worse for my walk with you, but on all accounts the better. Methinks I am regaining my health; but I would like to know first what it was that ailed me.

I have not yet conveyed your message to Mr.

Hosmer, but will not fail to do so. That idea of occupying the old house is a good one, — quite feasible, — and you could bring your hair pillow with you. It is an inn in Concord which I had not thought of, — a philosopher's inn. That large chamber might make a man's idea expand proportionably. It would be well to have an interest in some old chamber in a deserted house in every part of the country which attracted us. There would be no such place to receive one's guests as that. If old furniture is fashionable, why not go the whole house at once? I shall endeavor to make Mr. Hosmer believe that the old house is the chief attraction of his farm, and that it is his duty to preserve it by all honest appliances. You might take a lease of it *in perpetuo*, and done with it.

I am so wedded to my way of spending a day, — require such broad margins of leisure, and such a complete wardrobe of old clothes, that I am ill-fitted for going abroad. Pleasant is it sometimes to sit at home, on a single egg all day, in your own nest, though it may prove at last to be an egg of chalk. The old coat that I wear is Concord; it is my morning-robe and my study-gown, my working dress and suit of ceremony, and my night-gown after all. Cleave to the simplest ever. Home, — home, — home. *Cars* sound like *cares* to me.

I am accustomed to think very long of going anywhere, — am slow to move. I hope to hear a response of the oracle first.

However, I think that I will try the effect of your

talisman on the iron horse next Saturday, and dismount at Tarkiln Hill. Perhaps your sea air will be good for me.

I conveyed your invitation to Channing, but he apparently will not come.

Excuse my not writing earlier; but I had not decided.

Yours,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

CONCORD, Oct. 12, 1855.

MR. RICKETSON, — I fear that you had a lonely and disagreeable ride back to New Bedford, through the Carver woods, and so on, — perhaps in the rain, too, and I am in part answerable for it. I feel very much in debt to you and your family for the pleasant days I spent at Brooklawn. Tell Arthur and Walton that the shells which they gave me are spread out, and make quite a show to inland eyes. Methinks I still hear the strains of the piano, the violin, and the flageolet blended together. Excuse *me* for the noise which I believe drove you to take refuge in the shanty. That shanty is indeed a favorable place to expand in, which I fear I did not enough improve.

On my way through Boston, I inquired for Gilpin's works at Little, Brown & Co.'s, Monroe's, Ticknor's, and Burnham's. They have not got them. They told me at Little, Brown & Co.'s that his works (not complete), in twelve volumes, 8vo, were imported, and sold in this country five or six

years ago for about fifteen dollars. Their terms for importing are ten per cent. on the cost. I copied from the "London Catalogue of Books, 1816–51," at their shop, the following list of Gilpin's Works: —

Gilpin (Wm.) Dialogues on Various Subjects, 8vo, 9s. Cadell.
Essays on Picturesque Subjects, 8vo, 15s. Cadell.
Exposition of the New Testament, 2 vols. 8vo, 16s. Longman.
Forest Scenery, by Sir T. D. Lauder, 2 vols. 8vo, 18s. Smith & E.
Lectures on the Catechism, 12mo, 3s. 6d. Longman.
Lives of the Reformers, 2 vols. 12mo, 8s. Rivington.
Sermons Illustrative and Practical, 8vo, 12s. Hatchard.
Sermons to Country Congregations, 4 vols. 8vo, £1. 16s. Longman.
Tour in Cambridge, Norfolk, etc., 8vo, 18s. Cadell.
Tour of the River Wye, 12mo, 4s. With plates, 8vo, 17s. Cadell.
Gilpin (W. S.) (?) Hints on Landscape Gardening, Royal 8vo, £1. Cadell.

Beside these, I remember to have read one volume on Prints, his Southern Tour (1775); Lakes of Cumberland, two volumes; Highlands of Scotland and West of England, two vols. — N. B. There *must* be plates in every volume.

I still see an image of those Middleborough Ponds in my mind's eye, — broad shallow lakes, with an iron mine at the bottom, — comparatively unvexed by sails, — only by Tom Smith and his

squaw, Sepits, "Sharper." I find my map of the state to be the best I have seen of that district. It is a question whether the islands of Long Pond or Great Quitticus offer the most attractions to a Lord of the Isles. That plant which I found on the shore of Long Pond chances to be a rare and beautiful flower — the Sabbatia chloroides — referred to Plymouth.

In a description of Middleborough in the Hist. Coll., Vol. III, 1810, signed Nehemiah Bennet, Middleborough, 1793, it is said: "There is on the easterly shore of Assawampsitt Pond, on the shore of Betty's Neck, two rocks which have curious marks thereon (supposed to be done by the Indians), which appear like the steppings of a person with naked feet which settled into the rocks; likewise the prints of a hand on several places, with a number of other marks; also there is a rock on a high hill a little to the eastward of the old stone fishing weir, where there is the print of a person's hand in said rock."

It would be well to look at those rocks again more carefully, also at the rock on the hill.

I should think that you would like to explore Snipatuit Pond in Rochester, — it is so large and near. It is an interesting fact that the alewives used to ascend to it, if they do not still, — both from Mattapoisett and through Great Quitticus.

There will be no trouble about the chamber in the old house, though, as I told you, Mr. Hosmer *may* expect some compensation for it. He says,

"Give my respects to Mr. Ricketson, and tell him that I cannot be at a large expense to preserve an antiquity or curiosity. Nature must do its work." "But," say I, "he asks you only not to assist Nature."

Yours, HENRY D. THOREAU.

BROOKLAWN, 13 Oct., '55.

DEAR THOREAU, — Your long lost letter came to hand last Monday, and I concluded that you had safely arrived in Concord and had forwarded it yourself.

One week ago this morning we parted in Plymouth. I looked out of my window and got the last glimpse of you going off with your umbrella and carpet-bag or valise.

Your visit here was very agreeable to us all, and particularly to me. In fact your visit was highly successful except in duration — being much too short.

But the principal object in my now writing is, to assure you that I expect to spend a *few* days in Concord next week, and I shall leave here by the middle or towards the end of the week. I shall bring my hair pillow and some old clothes. I shall not consider it obligatory on you to devote much time to me, particularly as you are an *invalid*, but such time as you can spare I shall be glad to avail myself of, but I hope that Channing, you, and I will be able to *feelosophize* a little occasionally.

I shall go directly to the Tavern, and shall insist upon putting you to no trouble or attention.

I conclude in haste, breakfast waiting.

Yours truly,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

Tell Channing I hope to smoke my pipe with him soon.

BROOKLAWN, Saturday noon,
13 Oct., 1855.

DEAR THOREAU, — I wrote a few lines to you this morning before breakfast, which I took to the post-office, but since, I have received yours of yesterday, which rather changes my mind as to going to Concord. I thank you for your kindness in procuring for me information concerning Gilpin's work, which I shall endeavor to procure.

My ride home, as you anticipate, was somewhat dull and dreary through Carver woods, but I escaped the rain which did not come on until after my arrival home, about tea-time. I think that you hurried away from Brooklawn. We had just got our affairs in good train. I hope, however, that you will soon be able to come again and spend several weeks, when we will visit the pond in Rochester which you mentioned, and review our rides and rambles. The Middleborough ponds and their surroundings never tire me. I could go every day for a long time to them. I give my preference to the isles in Long Pond — we must get the Indian name of this favorite lake of ours.

The principal reason for my changing my mind

in regard to going to Concord is that you say Channing has gone, and perhaps for the winter. Although I intended to board and lodge at the Tavern, I expected to philosophize with you and C. by his wood-fire. But this is only a good reason for you to come to Brooklawn again. We have some weeks of good rambling weather yet before winter sets in. You will be very welcome to us all, and don't feel the least hesitation about coming if you have the desire so to do.

I am in the Shanty — Uncle James is here with me. He came up as soon as he heard you had gone. I have endeavored to convince him that you are perfectly harmless, but I think he still retains a portion of his fears. I think you would affiliate well if you should ever come together.

Yours truly,

D. Ricketson.

H. D. Thoreau, Esq.,
Concord, Mass.

Concord, October 16, 1855.

Friend Ricketson, — I have got both your letters at once. You must not think Concord so barren a place when Channing is away. There are the river and fields left yet; and I, though ordinarily a man of business, should have some afternoons and evenings to spend with you, I trust, — that is, if you could stand so much of me. If you can spend your time profitably here, or without ennui, having an occasional ramble or tete-a-tete with one of the natives, it will give me pleasure to have you in the

neighborhood. You see I am preparing you for our awful unsocial ways, — keeping in our dens a good part of the day, — sucking our claws perhaps. But then we make a religion of it, and that you cannot but respect.

If you know the taste of your own heart, and like it, come to Concord, and I 'll warrant you enough here to season the dish with, — aye, even though Channing and Emerson and I were all away. We might paddle quietly up the river. Then there are one or two more ponds to be seen, &c.

I should very much enjoy further rambling with you in your vicinity, but must postpone it for the present. To tell the truth, I am planning to get seriously to work after these long months of inefficiency and idleness. I do not know whether you are haunted by any such demon which puts you on the alert to pluck the fruit of each day as it passes, and store it safely in your bin. True, it is well to live abandonedly from time to time; but, to our working hours that must be as the spile to the bung. So for a long season I must enjoy only a low slanting gleam in my mind's eye from the Middleborough Ponds far away.

Methinks I am getting a little more strength into those knees of mine; and, for my part, I believe that God *does* delight in the strength of a man's legs.

Yours,

Henry D. Thoreau.

Brooklawn, Oct. 18th, 1855.

Dear Thoreau, — I received yours of the 16th inst. yesterday. I am very sorry that you did not conclude at once to come to Brooklawn and finish the visit which you so unceremoniously curtailed. But I cannot release you on so light grounds. I thought that you were a man of leisure. At any rate by your philosophy which I consider the best, you are so. You appear to be hugging your chains or endeavoring so to do. I approve of your courage, but cannot see the desperate need of your penance.

But I must appeal to you as a brother man, a philanthropist too. I am in need of help. I want a physician, and I send for you as the one I have the most confidence in.

You can bring your writing with you, but I can furnish you with stationery in abundance, and you can have as much time for "sucking your claws" as you wish.

Don't fail to come by Saturday noon the 20th.

Yours truly,

D. Ricketson.

I am in need of a physician, — so Dr. Thoreau, come to my relief. I need dosing with country rides and rambles, lake scenery, cold viands and jack-knife dinners.

I find the following in Sterne's Koran, which is the best thing I have seen for a long time: —

"Spare diet and clear skies are Apollo and the Muses."

CONCORD, December 25, 1855.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — Though you have not shown your face here, I trust that you did not interpret my last note to my disadvantage. I remember that, among other things, I wished to break it to you, that, owing to engagements, I should not be able to show you so much attention as I could wish, or as you had shown to me. How we did scour over the country! I hope your horse will live as long as one which I hear just died in the south of France at the age of forty. Yet I had no doubt you would get quite enough of me. Do not give it up so easily. The old house is still empty, and Hosmer is easy to treat with.

Channing was here about ten days ago. I told him of my visit to you, and that he too must go and see you and your country. This may have suggested his writing to you.

That island lodge, especially for some weeks in a summer, and new explorations in your vicinity, are certainly very alluring; but *such are my engagements to myself*, that I dare not promise to wend your way, but will for the present only heartily thank you for your kind and generous offer. When my vacation comes, then look out.

My legs have grown considerably stronger, and that is all that ails me.

But I wish now above all to inform you, — though I suppose you will not be particularly interested, — that Cholmondeley has gone to the Crimea, "a complete soldier," with a design, when he returns, if he

ever returns, to buy a cottage in the South of England, and tempt me over; but that, before going, he busied himself in buying and has caused to be forwarded to me by Chapman, a royal gift, in the shape of twenty-one distinct works (one in nine volumes, — forty-four volumes in all) almost exclusively relating to ancient Hindoo literature, and scarcely one of them to be bought in America. I am familiar with many of them, and know how to prize them.

I send you information of this as I might of the birth of a child.

Please remember me to all your family.

Yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

THE SHANTY, BROOKLAWN,
26th Feb., 1856.

DEAR THOREAU, — I often think of you and nearly as often feel the prompting to write you, and being alone in the Shanty this afternoon I have concluded to obey the prompting. I say alone, but I can fancy you seated opposite on the settee looking very *Orphic* or something more mystical. This winter must have been a grand one for your ruminations and I conclude that you will thaw out in the spring with the snakes and frogs, more of a philosopher than ever, which perhaps is needless. It has required all my little share of *feelosofy* to keep up my fortitude during the past Hyperborean interregnum. We have usually flattered ourselves that our winters were much milder than of most places in New England or even in the same latitude farther inland, on account

of our vicinity to the sea and the Gulf stream in particular. But O! the cold, cold days and weeks we have had in common with the rest of our country North, South, East and West!

But we are beginning to relax a little, and like barn-yard fowls begin to plume ourselves again and pick about, but we hardly begin to lay and cackle yet — that will all come in due season, and such a crowing some of us old cocks will make that if you are awake you will perhaps hear at Concord.

The snow has nearly gone, but our river is still firmly bound, and great sport have gentle and simple, young and old, thereon — skating, ice-boats, boys holding sails in their hands are shooting like "mercurial trout" in every direction up and down, even horses and sleighs and loaded wagons have passed where large ships float.

But I glory in none of this, on the contrary sigh for the more genial past, and hope for no more such desperate seasons. Ah! but March is close here, and she wears at least the gentle name of Spring as Bryant says — and soon may we expect to hear the bluebird and song sparrow again. Then let "Hope rule triumphant in the breast," and buckling our girth a little tighter journey on.

Dear Thoreau, I am under the greatest obligations to you. Before your Walden I felt quite alone in my best attainments and experiences, but now I find myself sustained and strengthened in my hopes of life. Can we not meet occasionally ere the evil days, should there be any in store for us, come? The

accumulated years "notched upon my stick" warn me not to be too prodigal of time. By April then I hope you will be ready to wend this way, and take Spring a little in advance of Concord; then with the bluebirds and sparrows, the robins and thrushes, will I welcome you and associate you.

I should have told you before that Channing is here in New Bedford. I had but just written his name, when old Ranger announced him, and he is now quietly smoking his pipe by the shanty fire. He arrived on Christmas day, and his first salutation on meeting me at the front door of my house was, "That 's your shanty," pointing towards it. He is engaged with the editor of the N. B. Mercury, and boards in town, but whereabout I have not yet discovered. He usually spends Saturday and a part of Sunday with me, and seems to enjoy himself pretty well.

Mr. Emerson is expected to lecture before our Lyceum to-morrow evening, but from a note I received from him in answer to an invitation to Brooklawn I should think it quite uncertain whether he be here.

I too have written and delivered a lecture this winter before the Lyceum of our village, Acushnet, on Popular Education, into which I contrived to get a good deal of radicalism, and had a successful time.

Should your Lyceum be in want of a lecture you might let me know, although I should hardly dare to promise to come, — that is, gratuitously except

incidental expenditures. I have commenced a new lecture of a little higher literary tone upon "The Poet Cowper and his Friends," and am meditating a grand affair wherein I expect to introduce some of the philosophy I have found in solitude, or rather to publish some of the communications and revelations received from a certain *old neighbor and visitor,* who occasionally favors by his presence, the world's outcasts, holding them up by the chin, and occasionally whispering weighty matters into their ears, which at these times are particularly free from wax.

Channing is not here now, that is in the Shanty, but it being after tea, is chatting by the fireside with my wife and daughters, and I am writing by the humming of my fire and the music of my Eolian harp. These are fine things to have in your windows, and lest you are not acquainted with them I will describe the way to make them.

Make two wedges of soft wood — make a slight incision in the top or thick part of the wedges and another in the thin part, which should be shaved down quite thin — then take a string of saddler's silk, or several strands of fine silk twisted to the size of the other, waxed or not, as you may see fit, make a knot in each end, the length of the string to be governed by the width of the window-sash where it is to be placed. Put one end of the string into the incision upon the top of the wedge and then down the side through the other split in the thin end and the other end likewise on the other wedge,

then place the two wedges drawing the string tight between the upper and lower sashes of your window and if the wind be favorable, it will give you a pleasing serenade.

Write soon and believe me,

Yours very truly,

D. R.

Thursday A. M., 29th.

Another pleasant day — the song sparrows singing from the old rail fences, and whortleberry bushes — the last day of winter. How rich we are!

My dear old Northman, sitting by the sea,
Whose azure tint is seen, reflected in thy e'e,
Leave your sharks and your dolphins, and eke the sporting whale,
And for a little while on milder scenes regale:
My heart is beating strongly to see your face once more,
So leave the land of *Thor*, and *row* along our shore!

D. R.

Pax vobiscum.

Concord, Mar. 5, '56.

Friend Ricketson, — I have been out of town, else I should have acknowledged your letter before. Though not in the best mood for writing I will say what I can now. You plainly have a rare, though a cheap resource in your Shanty. Perhaps the time will come when every country-seat will have one — when every country-seat will *be one*. I would advise you to see that shanty business out, though you go shanty mad. Work your vein till it is exhausted or conducts you to a broader one, so that C. shall

stand before your shanty and say, "That is your house."

This has indeed been a grand winter for me, and for all of us. I am not considering how much I have enjoyed it. What matters it how happy or unhappy we have been, if we have minded our business and advanced our affairs? I have made it a part of my business to wade in the snow and take the measure of the ice. The ice on one of our ponds was just two feet thick on the first of March; and I have to-day been surveying a wood-lot, where I sank about two feet at every step.

It is high time that you, fanned by the warm breezes of the Gulf Stream, had begun to "lay," for even the Concord hens have, though one wonders where they find the raw material of egg-shells here. Beware how you put off your laying to any later spring, else your cackling will not have the inspiring early spring sound.

I was surprised to hear the other day that Channing was in New Bedford. When he was here last (in December, I think), he said, like himself, in answer to my inquiry where he lived, "that he did not know the name of the place;" so it remained in a degree of obscurity to me. As you have made it certain to me that he is in New Bedford, perhaps I can return the favor by putting you on the track to his boarding-house there. Mrs. Arnold told Mrs. Emerson where it was — and the latter thinks, though she may be mistaken, that it was at a Mrs. Lindsey's.

I am rejoiced to hear that you are getting on so bravely with him and his verses. He and I, as you know, have been old cronies, —

> "Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill,
> Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
> Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
> We drove afield, and both together heard," etc.

"But O, the heavy change," now he is gone! The C. you have seen and described is the real Simon pure. You have seen him. Many a good ramble may you have together! You will see in him still more of *the same kind* to attract and to puzzle you. How to serve him most effectually has long been a problem with his friends. Perhaps it is left for you to solve it. I suspect that the most you or any one can do for him is to appreciate his genius, — to buy and read, and cause others to buy and read his poems. That is the hand which he has put forth to the world, — take hold of that. Review them if you can, — perhaps take the risk of publishing something more which he may write. Your knowledge of Cowper will help you to know C. He will accept sympathy and aid, but he will not bear questioning, unless the aspects of the sky are particularly auspicious. He will ever be "reserved and enigmatic," and you must deal with him at arm's length.

I have no secrets to tell you concerning him, and do not wish to call obvious excellences and defects by far-fetched names. I think I have already spoken to you more, and more to the purpose, on this theme,

than I am likely to write now — nor need I suggest how witty and poetic he is — and what an inexhaustible fund of good fellowship you will find in him.

As for visiting you in April, though I am inclined enough to take some more rambles in your neighborhood, especially by the seaside, I dare not engage myself, nor allow you to expect me. The truth is, I have my enterprises now as ever, at which I tug with ridiculous feebleness, but admirable perseverance, and cannot say when I shall be sufficiently fancy-free for such an excursion.

You have done well to write a lecture on Cowper. In the expectation of getting you to read it here, I applied to the curators of our Lyceum; but, alas! our Lyceum has been a failure this winter for want of funds. It ceased some weeks since, with a debt, they tell me, to be carried over to the next year's account. Only one more lecture is to be read, by a Signor Somebody, an Italian, paid for by private subscription, as a deed of charity to the lecturer. They are not rich enough to offer you your expenses even, though probably a month or two ago, they would have been glad of the chance.

However, the old house has not failed yet, and that offers you lodging for an indefinite time after you get into it; and in the mean while I offer you bed and board in my father's house, — always excepting hair-pillows and new-fangled bedding.

Remember me to your family.

Yours,

H. D. T.

Balloon.
The Shanty, 7th March, 1856.

To my dear Gabriel, — Who like one of old that appeared to Daniel, Zachariah, &c., hath in these latter days appeared unto the least of all the Daniels, Greeting: —

I have just received and read your genuine epistle of the 5th inst. You satisfy me fully in regard to C., and I trust we shall draw with an even yoke in future. I had thought of attempting something by way of revising his poems. A new public has grown up since their appearance, and their assassinator Poe, lies in the Potter's Field at Baltimore, without a stone to mark his grave, as somebody in the Home Journal of this week, says, — and thus hath Nemesis overtaken him.

I conclude you received my newspaper notice of Mr. Emerson's explosion before the New Bedford Lyceum, although you make no mention of it. You may be surprised at my sudden regard for his genius, but not more so than myself. It came by revelation. I had never, I believe, read a page of his writings when I heard his lecture. How I came to go to hear him I hardly know, and must conclude that my good Gabriel led me there.

Don't despair of me yet, I am getting along bravely in my Shanty and hope to crow (Note: A true shanty clear — chanticleer) in due time. Somehow, too, I am getting wonderfully interested in ancient lore, and am delighted to find that there were odd fellows like you and I and C. some hundreds of years before our *data*.

How wonderfully daylight shines upon us at times!

I no longer wonder that you had Homer, Valmiki, Vyasa, &c., in your Walden shanty. They have already peeped into my windows, and I shall not be surprised to have them seated within as my guests ere long. You need not be astonished if you hear of my swearing in Sanscrit or at least in Pan crit!

I have just got a taste of these old fellows, and what a glorious feast awaits me! What a lucky mortal are you to be the possessor of those priceless treasures, sent you from England! I am about starting upon a pilgrimage into the country of these ancient Hindus, and already in fancy at least see the "gigantic peaks of the Himalayas" and sit beneath the "tremendous heights of the Dhawalagiri range" — so far as the railway of books can carry me there. Give me your hand, Gabriel, and lead the way.

Now for the present time. We are beginning to have Spring here — and I have already heard the warbling of the bluebird near the Shanty — but did not get a sight of one. The bluebird once appeared here as early as the middle of February, but disappeared as the weather proved colder and did not return until about the middle of March.

I am sorry you talk so discouragingly about coming this way this Spring. Don't be afraid of me, dear Gabriel — I will do you no harm. I have my fears also. I conclude that I am too social for you, although this is a *sin* I have never been accused of.

Think of it again, about coming here; but don't come unless you get a clear "response from your oracle"! I quote from Gabriel himself. I am quite humbled at your halting — the cords of love do not draw you, and I have none stronger to bring into requisition, but I shall not release you without a struggle. — May I not then expect you in May — things *may* be done in that month which none other in the calendar admit of. It is the month of May-bees — so some fine morning may you alight here a *thoro' may-bee*, fresh from Musketaquid. Then you and Channing and I can sit in this little hermitage like the Gymnosophists of old, and you may do the stamping on the ground to any Alexander that may offer himself an intruder.

I copy from my Journal of this day the following for your *edification!*

"'Orphics' by a Modern Hindu. The ancient Hindus of course wrote no 'Orphics,' — the gentleman is a modern."

In proportion as we see the merits of others we add to our own.

Mind is ever in the spring — one eternal May morning, the same in its original freshness whether in the Sanscrit, the Greek and other languages or the English, as a medium of expression. Mind has an eternal youth.

"Haunted forever by the eternal mind" is a fine thought of Wordsworth, himself a philosopher and priest of Nature. Man must ever find this to be true — the thoughtful man.

PARACHUTE.
SOLAR LAMP, 10 P. M.

DEAR T. — Your letter, as usual, was full of wisdom, and has done me much good.

Your visit here, last fall, did much to carry me well through the winter.

I consider a visit from you a perfect benison, and hope that you will get a good response for May.

I must try to get a look at the old house during the spring.

I thank you for your kind invitation, but I am already too much in debt to you. Should I visit Concord it must be in a way not to incommode your household.

I think I will set up a bed at once in the old house, to be kept as a kind of retreat for a few days at a time occasionally.

I should have stated before that Channing and I have passed a word in relation to going to Concord, together, so look out!

I wish to know if you think my sketch of the Concord sage was right, if you received the paper.

With kind remembrances to your family, good-night. I go to bed. D. R.

A DIURNAL RHYME.

Time, EVENING.

In my humble shanty, rude,
Where I pass the graceful hours,
Sweetened by sweet solitude —
The true springtime with its flowers,

Many solemn truths I learn
That are found not in the books,
Ne'er denied to those who yearn
For them in their chosen nooks : —
For primeval wisdom here
Finds me ready at her call,
And upon my listening ear
Oft her kindly whisperings fall, —
Telling me in accents clear, —
Known but to the ear within,
That the source of all I hear
Did with man at first begin.
And in silence as I sit,
Calmly waiting for the Power,
Knowledge to my soul doth flit,
That no learning e'er could shower : —
Sempiternal wisdom deep,
From the endless source divine,
Not as creeds and dogmas creep,
But as doth the day-god shine —
With broad beams of amber light,
Reaching into every cell,
Driving out the ancient night,
That my soul in peace may dwell, —
Thus I 'm taught to look and learn,
Rather calmly to receive,
And from stupid schoolmen turn,
To that which will ne'er deceive.
. . . . . .

I copy the above as the shortest way of informing you how I am getting along, and so abruptly close. My dear Gabriel, jungfung, yours warmly,

D. THE LEAST.

CONCORD, September 2, '56.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — My father and mother regret that your indisposition is likely to prevent your coming to Concord at present. It is as well that you do not, if you depend on seeing me, for I expect to go to New Hampshire the latter part of the week. I shall be glad to see you afterward, if you are prepared for and can endure my unsocial habits.

I would suggest that you have one or two of the teeth, which you can best spare, extracted at once, for the sake of your general, no less than particular health. This is the advice of one who has had quite his share of toothache in this world. I am a trifle stouter than when I saw you last, yet far, far short of my best estate.

I thank you for two newspapers which you have sent me — am glad to see that you have studied out the history of the ponds, got the Indian names straightened — which means made more crooked — &c., &c. I remember them with great satisfaction. They are all the more interesting to me for the lean and sandy soil that surrounds them. Heaven is not one of your fertile Ohio bottoms, you may depend on it. Ah, the Middleboro ponds ! — Great Platte lakes. Remember me to the perch in them. I trust that I may have some better craft than that oarless pumpkin-seed the next time I navigate them.

From the size of your family I infer that Mrs. Ricketson and your daughters have returned from Franconia. Please remember me to them, and also

to Arthur and Walton, and tell the latter that if in the course of his fishing he should chance to come across the shell of a terrapin and will save it for me, I shall be exceedingly obliged to him.

Channing dropped in on us the other day, but soon dropped out again.

Yours, HENRY D. THOREAU.

CONCORD, Sept. 23, '56.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I have returned from New Hampshire and find myself *in statu quo*. My journey proved one of business purely. As you suspected, I saw Alcott, and I spoke to him of you, and your good will toward him; so now you may consider yourself introduced. He would be glad to hear from you about a conversation in New Bedford. He was about setting out on a conversing tour to Fitchburg, Worcester, and three or four weeks hence Waterbury, Ct., New York, Newport (?). Now, then, is the season to catch him, or else when he comes to Newport (?) or Providence (?). You may be sure that you will not have occasion to repent of any exertions which you may make to secure an audience for him. I send you one of his programmes lest he should not have done so himself.

You propose to me teaching the following winter. I find that I cannot entertain the idea. It would require such a revolution of all my habits, I think, and would sap the very foundations of me. I am engaged to Concord and my own private pursuits by 10,000 ties, and it would be suicide to rend them.

If I were weaker, and not somewhat stronger physically, I should be more tempted. I am so busy that I cannot even think of visiting you.

The days are not long enough, or I am not strong enough to do the work of the day before bedtime. Excuse my paper. It chances to be the best I have.

Yours, HENRY D. THOREAU.

BROOKLAWN, 24 Sept. 1856.

DEAR FRIEND,—Yours of the 23rd is received, and I notice what you say in regard to Mr. Alcott's class; but I fear that I shall hardly prove able to undertake the business of obtaining one for him. It is entirely out of my line and very much *averse* to my taste, to solicit from any one. People are so ready to ride a "high horse," as soon as you present anything to them that is left for their consideration or decision, that I shrink at once from any such collision. Still should anything turn up whereby I may effect the object through a third party, I shall be very glad so to do. In the mean time I am ready to listen to any suggestions Mr. Alcott may make to me in the premises.

I am sorry that I shall not have the pleasure of a visit from you this fall, but as you need companionship so much less than I do I suppose the pleasure would not be reciprocal were we to meet. I am becoming quite a historical *sketcher*, and have already commenced publishing a history of New Bedford, or rather of the old township of Dartmouth, which included New Bedford, also the

townships of Westport, Fairhaven, and the present Dartmouth.

Have you ever observed how many of the Indian names of rivers, lakes, &c., end in et? Assawampset, Acushnet, Pascamanset, &c., &c. I am informed by a person who appeared to have some knowledge of Indian words that *et* signifies water — the Taunton river was called Nemasket for several miles from its outlet from the Middleborough Ponds — then Tetiquet or Tetiquid. Now I come to my object — did not your own Musketaquid have the final syllable *quet?* If the fact can be established that *et* meant water, I should have no hesitation in making the alteration.

Please remember me most truly to your family, and to Mr. Emerson and his, when you next meet him.

Trusting that when the right time comes around we shall meet once more, I remain,

Yours faithfully,

D. Ricketson.

Concord, Oct. 31, 1856.

Friend Ricketson, — I have not seen anything of your English author yet. Edward Hoar, my companion in Maine and at the White Mountains, his sister, Elizabeth, and a Miss Prichard, another neighbor of ours, went to Europe in the Niagara on the 6th. I told them to look out for you under the Yardley Oak, but it seems that they will not find you there.

I had a pleasant time in Tuckerman's Ravine at

the White Mountains, in July, entertaining four beside myself under my little tent through some soaking rains; and more recently I have taken an interesting walk with Channing about Cape Ann. We were obliged to "dipper it" a good way, on account of the scarcity of fresh water, for we got most of our meals by the shore.

C. is understood to be here for the winter, but I rarely see him.

I should be pleased to see your face here in the course of the Indian summer, which may still be expected — if any authority can tell us when that phenomenon *does* occur. We would like to hear the story of your travels, for if you have not been fairly intoxicated with Europe, you have been half-seas-over, and so probably can tell more about it.

Yours truly, HENRY D. THOREAU.

CONCORD, March 28, 1857.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — If it chances to be perfectly agreeable and convenient to you, I will make you a visit next week, say Wednesday or Thursday, and we will have some more rides to Assawampset and the seashore. Have you got a boat on the former yet? Who knows but we may camp out on the island?

I propose this now, because it will be more novel to me at this season, and I should like to see your early birds, &c.

Your historical papers have all come safely to hand, and I thank you for them. I see that they

will be indispensable, *memoires pour servier*. By the way, have you read Church's History of Philip's War, and looked up the localities? It should make part of a chapter.

I had a long letter from Cholmondeley lately, which I should like to show you.

I will expect an answer to this straightaway — but be sure you let your own convenience and inclinations rule it.

Yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

P. S.—Please remember me to your family.

NEW BEDFORD, Sunday A. M., 29 March, '57.

DEAR THOREAU,—I have just received your note of the 28th at my brother's, and hasten a reply for the Post Office before I leave for Brooklawn.

Nothing would give me more pleasure than a visit from you at any time. It will be perfectly agreeable to myself and family at this present time, and I shall duly expect you on Wednesday or Thursday. Should this reach you in time for an answer, I will be at Tarkiln Hill station to meet you; if not, make your appearance as early as you wish. You can leave your baggage at the depot, and I will send for it if you do not find me or our carriage in waiting.

As Channing did not make his usual appearance, yesterday P. M., I conclude that he is with you today, and if he leaves before Wednesday or Thursday, you may like to have his company hereward. We are getting on very nicely together.

The early birds are daily coming. Song sparrows, bluebirds, robins, meadow larks, blackbirds ("Gen. Abercrombies") are already here, frogs croaking, but not piping yet, and the spring quite genial.

My historical sketches have kept me quite busy, but agreeably so during the past winter. They are quite to my surprise, very popular. I should have hardly supposed that my homely habits and homelier style of composition would have suited many.

Should Channing be in Concord and in the humor, he can report my home affairs more fully, if you wish.

Remember me to your parents and sister and other friends, particularly the Emersons.

I write at my brother's, and in the midst of conversation, in which I am participating. You will perceive this is not a Shanty letter, but I am none the less cordially yours,

D. Ricketson.

Concord, April 1, 1857.

Dear Ricketson, — I got your note of welcome night before last. Channing is not here, at least I have not seen nor heard of him, but depend on meeting him in New Bedford. I expect if the weather is favorable to take the 4.30 train from Boston to-morrow, Thursday p. m., for I hear of no noon train, and shall be glad to find your wagon at Tarkiln Hill, for I see it will be rather late for going across lots.

Alcott was here last week, and will probably visit New Bedford within a week or two.

I have seen all the spring signs you mention, and a few more, even here. Nay, I heard one frog peep nearly a week ago, methinks the very first one in all this region. I wish that there were a few more signs of spring in myself — however, I take it that there *are* as many within us as we think we hear without us. I am decent for a steady pace, but not yet for a race. I have a little cold at present, and you speak of rheumatism about the head and shoulders. Your frost is not quite out. I suppose that the earth itself has a little cold and rheumatism about these times, but all these things together produce a very fair general result. In a concert, you know, we must sing our parts feebly sometimes, that we may not injure the general effect. I should n't wonder if my two-year old invalidity had been a positively charming feature to some amateurs favorably located. Why not a blasted man as well as a blasted tree, on your lawn?

If you should happen not to see me by the train named, do not go again, but wait at home for me, or a note from

Yours,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

CONCORD, August 18, 1857.

DEAR SIR, — Your Wilson Flagg seems a serious person, and it is encouraging to hear of a contemporary who recognizes Nature so squarely, and

selects such a theme as "Barns." (I would rather "Mount Auburn" were omitted.) But he is not alert enough. He wants stirring up with a pole. He should practice turning a series of somersets rapidly, or jump up and see how many times he can strike his feet together before coming down. Let him make the earth turn round now the other way, and whet his wits on it, whichever way it goes, as on a grindstone; in short, see how many ideas he can entertain at once.

His style, as I remember, is singularly vague (I refer to the book), and before I got to the end of the sentences, I was off the track. If you indulge in long periods, you must be sure to have a snapper at the end. As for style of writing, if one has anything to say, it drops from him simply and directly, as a stone falls to the ground. There are no two ways about it, but down it comes, and he may stick in the points and stops wherever he can get a chance. New ideas come into this world somewhat like falling meteors, with a flash and an explosion, and perhaps somebody's castle roof perforated. To try to polish the stone in its descent, to give it a peculiar turn, and make it whistle a tune, perchance, would be of no use, if it were possible. Your polished stuff turns out not to be meteoric, but of this earth. However, there is plenty of time, and Nature is an admirable schoolmistress.

Speaking of correspondence, you ask me if I "cannot turn over a new leaf in that line." I certainly could if I were to receive it; but just then

I looked up and saw that your page was dated "May 10," though mailed in August, and it occurred to me that I had seen you since that date this year. Looking again it appeared that your note was written in '56! However, it was a *new* leaf to me, and I *turned it over* with as much interest as if it had been written the day before. Perhaps you kept it so long, in order that the manuscript and subject matter might be more in keeping with the old-fashioned paper on which it was written.

I travelled the length of Cape Cod on foot, soon after you were here, and within a few days have returned from the wilds of Maine, where I have made a journey of three hundred and twenty-five miles with a canoe and an Indian and a single white companion, Edward Hoar, Esq., of this town, lately from California, traversing the head-waters of the Kennebec, Penobscot, and St. John's.

Can't you extract any advantage out of that depression of spirits you refer to? It suggests to me cider-mills, wine-presses, &c., &c. All kinds of pressure or power should be used and made to turn some kind of machinery.

Channing was just leaving Concord for Plymouth when I arrived, but said he should be here again in two or three days.

Please remember me to your family, and say that I have at length learned to sing Tom Bowlin according to the notes.

Yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

The Shanty, Sept. 7th, 1857.

Dear Thoreau, — I wrote you some two weeks ago that I intended visiting Concord, but have not yet found the way there. The object of my now writing is to invite you to make me a visit. Walton's small sail boat is now in Assawampset Pond. We took it up in our farm wagon to the south shore of Long Pond (Apponoquet), visited the islands in course and passed through the river that connects the said ponds. This is the finest season as to weather to visit the ponds, and I feel much stronger than when you were here last Spring. The boys and myself have made several excursions to our favorite region this summer, but we have left the best of it, so far as the voyage is concerned, for you to accompany us.

We hear nothing of Channing, but conclude that he is with you — trust he has not left us entirely, and hope to see him again before long.

Now should my invitation prove acceptable to you, I should be glad to see you just as soon after the receipt of this as you like to come, immediately if you please.

If you cannot come and should like to see me in Concord, please inform me, but we all hope to see you here.

Mrs. R. and the rest join in regards and invitation.

Yours truly,

D. R.

Remember me to Channing.

Concord, September 9, 1857.

Friend Ricketson, — I thank you for your kind invitation to visit you, but I have taken so many vacations this year, — at New Bedford, Cape Cod, and Maine, — that any more relaxation — call it rather dissipation — will cover me with shame and disgrace. I have not earned what I have already enjoyed. As some heads cannot carry much wine, so it would seem that I cannot bear so much society as you can. I have an immense appetite for solitude, like an infant for sleep, and if I don't get enough of it this year, I shall cry all the next.

My mother's house is full at present; but if it were not, I should have no right to invite you hither, while entertaining such designs as I have hinted at. However, if you care to storm the town, I will engage to take some afternoon walks with you, — retiring into profoundest solitude the most sacred part of the day.

Yours sincerely,

H. D. T.

(Written before my late visit, as the date shows.)

The Shanty, Friday Evening,
Dec. 11, 1857.

Dear Thoreau, — I expect to go to Boston next week, Thursday 17th, with my daughters Anna and Emma to attend the Anti-Slavery Bazaar. They will probably return home the next day, and I proceed to Malden for a day or two. After which I may proceed to Concord, if I have your permission,

and if you will be at home, for without you Concord would be quite poor and deserted, like to the place some poet, perhaps Walter Scott, describes, —

> "Where thro' the desert walks the lapwing flies
> And tires their echoes with unceasing cries."

Channing says I can take his room in the garret of his house, but I think I should take to the tavern. Were you at Walden I should probably storm your castle and make good an entrance, and perhaps as an act of generous heroism allow you quarters while I remained. But in sober truth I should like to see you and sit or lie down in your room and hear you growl once more, thou brave old Norseman — thou Thor, thunder-god-man. I long to see your long beard, which for a short man is rather a stretch of imagination or understanding. C—— says it is terrible to behold, but improves you mightily.

How grandly your philosophy sits now in these *trying* times. I lent my Walden to a broken merchant lately as the best panacea I could afford him for his troubles.

You should now come out and call together the lost sheep of Israel, thou cool-headed pastor, no Corydon forsooth, but genuine Judean — fulminate from the banks of Concord upon the banks of Discord and once more set ajog a pure curren(t)cy whose peaceful tide may wash us clean once more again. *Io Pœan!*

Is "Father Alcott" in your city? I should count much on seeing him too — a man who is All-cot

should not be without a home at least in his chosen land.

Don't be provoked at my nonsense, for anything better would be like "carrying coals to Newcastle." I would sit at the feet of Gamaliel, so farewell for the present.

With kind remembrances to your family, I remain,

Faithfully your friend,

D. Ricketson.

P. S. If I can't come please inform me.

Concord, June 30, 1858.

Friend Ricketson, — I am on the point of starting for the White Mountains in a wagon with my neighbor, Edward Hoar, and I write to you now rather to apologize for not writing than to answer worthily your three notes. I thank you heartily for them. You will not care for a little delay in acknowledging them, since your dates show that you can afford to wait. Indeed my head has been so taken up with company, &c., that I could not reply to you fitly before, nor can I now.

As for preaching to men these days in the Walden strain — is it of any consequence to preach to an audience of men who *can* fail? or who can be *revived?* There are few beside. Is it any success to interest these parties? If a man has *speculated* and *failed*, he will probably do these things again, in spite of you or me.

I confess that it is rare that I rise to sentiment in my relations to men — ordinarily to a mere patient

and maybe wholesome good will. I can imagine something more, but the truth compels me to regard the ideal and the actual as two things.

Channing has come, and as suddenly gone, and left a short poem "Near Home," published (?) or printed by Munroe, which I have hardly had time to glance at. As you may guess, I learn nothing of you from him.

You already foresee my answer to your invitation to make you a summer visit — I am bound for the Mountains. But I trust that you have vanquished ere this, those dusky demons that seem to lurk around the head of the river. You know that this warfare is nothing but a kind of nightmare — it is our thoughts alone which give those *un*worthies any body or existence.

I made an excursion with Blake of Worcester to Monadnoc, a few weeks since. We took our blankets and food, spent two nights on the Mountain, and did not go into a house.

Alcott has been very busy for a long time repairing an old shell of a house, and I have seen very little of him. I have looked more at the houses which birds build. Watson made us all very generous presents from his nursery in the spring, especially did he remember Alcott.

Excuse me for not writing any more at present, and remember me to your family.

Yours,

H. D. Thoreau.

THE SHANTY, 9 P. M.,
Nov. 3d, 1858.

DEAR THOREAU, — Your truly welcome note of the 31st ult. reached me only this evening. I am sorry our English Australian has not been in Concord. He is quite an original, and appeared to be as familiar with the Concord worthies, as though he had been a fellow townsman of theirs. He is a young man, but has seen a good deal of the world, inside and outside — has lived some years in and about London, and fellowshipped with all sorts of folks, authors, gypsies, vagrants, &c., his accounts of which are entertaining — talks easy and well, has no vain pretensions, although I found incidentally that he is highly connected — I believe, with the family of the celebrated Lord Lyttleton, of monody memory — wears common cheap clothes, and carries his own baggage, a small leathern bag, is short and rather stout, full beard and of sandy complexion, smokes a pipe a good deal, likes malt liquor and an occasional glass of whiskey or gin, but is by no means intemperate, only English and cosmopolitan also in his habits. He has a little book in project to be called "Pots of Beer," the chapters headed Pot First, Pot Second, &c., so on — Conversations and reflections over these inspiring vessels. (P. S. Of wrath?)

I told Channing about him (who, by the way — C. — I found at his old post at the Mercury office, last week), and he said that you would not like his pipe. This puts me to thinking, as Jack Downing

would say, and I want to take this opportunity to apologize for having so often offended you by my untimely *puffs*. I assure you, in future, that I will strive to refrain in your presence, for I am ready to "acknowledge the corn," and plead guilty, craving pardon for my manifold sins against your purer tastes.

I feel deeply disappointed and somewhat chagrined at my failure in going to Europe, and hope to master sufficient courage to embark again next spring, when I shall probably go from New York, whence like the *decensus averni* there is no return. You would like to know more about my voyage. I was really "half seas over," as you intimate, in more senses than one, for my sea-sickness operated on my brain like a potent stimulus, accompanied with the most painful vertigo. I felt somewhat as I conclude a dancing dervish might, after having spun round for some time, that is if they ever do so, or is it only the Shakers that perform these gyrations? But the newspaper I send you will give you an account of my experiences on board ship. The paragraph about the moose is quite Thoreau$^{\text{ish}}_{\text{ian}}$ — take your choice — and the phrase, *tribute to the sea*, is, I think, borrowed from your account of your winter voyage to Nantucket, some years ago.

I have published my history of New Bedford in a neat duodecimo of 400 pages, and am *prospecting* for a volume of poems — also writing some sketches called "Smoke from my Pipe" — in the second chapter of which I introduce a certain philosopher,

a friend of mine, who built his own house, earned his own livelihood, and lived alone some years, a genial man, a scholar, &c. Can you guess him out? I think I may also introduce, all of course, in a respectful and quiet way, some other of the Concordian band — but more of this anon, as we authors say, when we run out our line.

I am quite tempted by your kind invitation to visit Concord during the "Indian summer," should such a boon come this month. I may go to Boston soon, and may also possibly get as far as Concord for a few days — but whether I do or not, I want you to come down and visit me. I value your acquaintance highly, and I want to see Mr. Emerson and Father Alcott once more. Life is too short, and noble men and women too scarce, for me to lose any opportunity of enjoying the society of such, when I can do so without obtrusion.

With my warm regards to your family and my other Concord friends, and hoping to hear from you again very soon, I remain, yours faithfully,

DANIEL RICKETSON.

Please return the newspaper.

I am amused by your account of your party in the rain under your little tent. I trust your friends were quite contented with your hospitality.

CONCORD, November 6, 1858.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I was much pleased with your lively and life-like account of your voyage. You were more than repaid for your trouble after

all. The coast of Nova Scotia, which you sailed along from Windsor westward, is particularly interesting to the historian of this country, having been settled earlier than Plymouth. Your "Isle of Haut," is properly "Isle Haut," or the High Island of Champlain's map. There is another off the coast of Maine. By the way, the American elk, of *American authors* (*Cervus Canadensis*) is a distinct animal from the moose (*Cervus alces*), though the latter is also called elk by many.

You drew a very vivid portrait of the Australian, — short and stout, with a pipe in his mouth, and his book inspired by beer, Pot First, Pot Second, &c. I suspect that he must be pot-bellied withal. Methinks I see the smoke going up from him as from a cottage on the moor. If he does not quench his genius with his beer, it may burst into a clear flame at last. However, perhaps he intentionally adopts the low style.

What do you mean by that ado about smoking, and my "purer tastes"? I should like his pipe as well as his beer, at least. Neither of them is so bad as to be "highly connected," which you say he is, unfortunately. No! I expect nothing but pleasure in "smoke from *your* pipe."

You and the Australian must have put your heads together when you concocted those titles, — with pipes in your mouths over a pot of beer. I suppose that your chapters are Whiff the First, Whiff the Second, &c. But, of course, it is a more modest expression for "Fire from my Genius."

You must have been very busy since you came back, or before you sailed, to have brought out your History, of whose publication I had not heard. I suppose that I have read it in the Mercury. Yet I am curious to see how it looks in a volume, with your name on the title-page.

I am more curious still about the poems. Pray put some sketches into the book; your shanty for frontispiece; Arthur and Walton's boat (if you can) running for Cuttyhunk in a tremendous gale; not forgetting "Be honest, boys" &c., near by; the Middleborough Ponds, with a certain island looming in the distance; the Quaker meeting-house and the Brady House, if you like; the villagers catching smelts with dip-nets in the twilight, at the Head of the river, &c., &c. Let it be a local and villageous book as much as possible. Let some one make a characteristic selection of mottoes from your shanty walls, and sprinkle them in an irregular manner, at all angles, over the fly-leaves and margins, as a man stamps his name in a hurry; and also canes, pipes, and jackknives, of all your patterns, about the frontispiece. I can think of plenty of devices for tail-pieces. Indeed, I should like to see a hair-pillow, accurately drawn, for one; a cat, with a bell on, for another; the old horse, with his age printed in the hollow of his back; half a cocoanut shell by a spring; a sheet of blotted paper; a settle occupied by a settler at full length, &c., &c., &c. Call all the arts to your aid.

Don't wait for the Indian summer, but bring it with you. Yours truly,

H. D. T.

P. S. Let me ask a favor. I am trying to write something about the autumnal tints, and I wish to know how much our trees differ from English and European ones in this respect. Will you observe or learn for me, what English or European trees, if any, still retain their leaves in Mr. Arnold's garden (the gardener will supply the true names); and also if the foliage of any (and what) European or foreign trees there have been brilliant the past month. If you will do this you will greatly oblige me. I return the newspaper with this.

THE SHANTY, Nov. 10th, 1858.

FRIEND THOREAU, — Your very pleasant and encouraging letter reached me on Monday (the 8th). Pleasant from the cheerful spirit in which it was written, and encouraging from the appreciation you express for the little portraits of my late travelling experiences I sent you.

This forenoon I made a visit to Arnold's grounds, walking to and from through the woods and fields most of the way on the route by the upper road by which the wind-mill stands. In company with the gardener, rejoicing in the appropriate and symphonious name of Wellwood Young, whose broad Gaelic accent rendered an attentive ear necessary to catch the names, I made the following list. The Scotch larch, for instance, he said came from Norroway (Norway), the yellow fringes of which were still hanging on the branches.

The following is the list I made in accordance

with your request. I give the names without any order, just as we happened to meet the trees. Horse-chestnut, quite full of yellow and green foliage. English walnut, do. Beech, Linden, Hawthorn (nearly perfect in green foliage, only a little decayed at the top, but in a sheltered place), Silver Linden, Copper Beech, Elm, Weeping Ash, Weeping Willow, Scotch Larch, Euanimus Europeus (Gardener's name), I suppose correct. These are all European or English, I believe.

I give a few others not European, viz: Osage orange (or Maclura), Cornus Florida (handsome) Tulip, three-thorned Acacia, Mexican Cypress.

There were numerous shrubs in full leaf, among them the Guelder Rose. Vines, Bignonia radicans and Bignonia cuminata.

I send a few leaves. The largest green leaf is the American Linden — the smaller, the European copper leaved Beech. One English Elm (green), and two smaller and narrower leaves, the *Euanimus Europeus*.

I am sorry the list is no fuller, but I think it includes all in these grounds. The location is quite sheltered. I could not ascertain from the gardener what trees exhibited particular brilliancy of foliage last month. I conclude, however, that these I have named were quite fresh up to the last of October.

It is barely possible I may reach Concord on Saturday next and remain over Sunday, but hardly probable as they say.

Channing I understand has been to Concord since

I wrote you last, and is now here again. Is he not quite as much a "creature of moods" as old Sudbury Inn? But I am in poor mood for writing, and besides it is nearly dark (5 P. M.).

May I not hear from you again soon, and may I not expect a visit also ere long?

As this is only a business letter I trust you will excuse its dulness. Hoping I have supplied you (Channing has just come in) with what you wanted, I conclude.

Yours faithfully,

D. R.

P. S. If I should not go to Concord I will endeavor to get one of my books to you soon.

CONCORD, Nov. 22d, 1858.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I thank you for your "History." Though I have not yet read it again, I have looked far enough to see that I like the homeliness of it; that is, the good old-fashioned way of writing as if you actually lived where you wrote. The man's interest in a single bluebird is more than a complete, but dry, list of the fauna and flora of a town. It is also a considerable advantage to be able to say at any time, if D. R. is not here, here is his book. Alcott being here, and inquiring after you (whom he has been expecting), I lent the book to him almost immediately. He talks of going west the latter part of this week.

Channing is here again, as I am told, but I have not seen him.

I thank you also for the account of the trees. It was to my purpose, and I hope that you got something out of it too.

I suppose that the cold weather prevented your coming here. Suppose you try a winter walk on skates.

Please remember me to your family.

Yours,

H. D. T.

Concord, Dec. 6, 1858.

Friend Ricketson, — Thomas Cholmondeley, my English acquaintance, is here on his way to the West Indies. He wants to see New Bedford, a whaling town. I tell him that I would like to introduce him to you there, thinking more of his seeing you than New Bedford, so we propose to come your way to-morrow. Excuse this short notice, for the time is short. If, on any account, it is inconvenient to see us, you will treat us accordingly.

Yours truly,

Henry D. Thoreau.

The Shanty, 9 Feb. 1859.

My dear Friend, — I received last evening a Boston newspaper with your superscription, containing the record of the decease of your father. It had previously been published in the New Bedford Mercury, perhaps by Channing.

You must all feel his loss very much, particularly your mother. I have rarely, if ever, met a man

who inspired me with more respect. He appeared to me to be a real embodiment of honest virtue, as well as a true gentleman of the old school. I also recognized in him a fund of good fellowship, or what would perhaps better and more respectfully express it, kindly friendship. I remember with pleasure, a ramble I took with him about Concord some two or three years ago, at a time when you were away from home, on which occasion I was much impressed with his good sense, his fine social nature, and genuine hospitality. He reminded me much of my own father, in fact, I never saw a man more like him even in his personal appearance and manners — both bore upon their countenances the impress of care and sorrow, a revelation of the experience of life, written in the most legible characters, and one which always awakens my deepest sympathy and reverence.

I doubt not but that he was a good man, and however we may be unable to peer beyond this sphere of experience, may we not trust that some good angel, perhaps that of his mother (was her name Jeanie Burns?), has already welcomed him to the spirit land? At any rate, if there be any award for virtue and well doing I think it is for such as he. Veiled as the future is in mystery profound, I think we may fully rely upon Divine Wisdom who has seen it proper not only to conceal from us knowledge beyond this life, but has also wrapped us in so much *obscurity* even here. But let us go on trustfully in Him — the sun yet shines, the birds sing,

the flowers bloom, and Nature is still as exhaustless as ever in her charms and riches for those who love her.

I trust that your mother and sister will find that consolation which they so much need. They as well as you have my warmest sympathy, and it is a pleasurable sorrow for me to bear my poor tribute to the memory and worth of him from whom you have so lately parted.

It seems to me that Nature — and by this I always mean the out-o'-door life in woods and fields, by streams and lakes, etc. — affords the best balm for our wounded spirits. One of the best things written by Francis Jeffrey, and which I have tacked upon my Shanty wall, is, "If it were not for my love of beautiful nature and poetry, my heart would have died within me long ago."

Would not a little run from home soon, if you can be spared, be well for you? Can you not catch the early spring a little in advance? We are probably a week or two before you in her maiden steps. Soon shall we see the catkins upon the willows, and hear the bluebird and song-sparrow again — how full of hope and cheer! Even this morning (a soft, drizzling one) I have heard the sweet, mellow, long-drawn pipe of the meadow lark. I have also seen robins occasionally during the winter, and a flock of quails several times, besides numerous partridges and rabbits.

I see nothing of Channing of late.

With my best regards to your mother and sister, believe me

Very truly your friend,

D. Ricketson.

Please write me.

P. S. Your letter indicates health of mind and good pluck. In fact, Dr. Pluck is a capital physician. Glory in whortle and blackberries; eat them like an Indian, abundantly and from the bushes and vines. When you can, smell of sweet fern, bayberry, sassafras, yellow birch, and rejoice in the songs of crickets and harvest flies.

Io Pæan.

Concord, 12th February, 1859.

Friend Ricketson, — I thank you for your kind letter. I sent you the notice of my father's death as much because you knew him as because you knew me. I can hardly realize that he is dead. He had been sick about two years, and at last declined rather rapidly, though steadily. Till within a week or ten days before he died he was hoping to see another spring, but he then discovered that this was a vain expectation, and, thinking that he was dying, he took leave of us several times within a week before his departure. Once or twice he expressed a slight impatience at the delay. He was quite conscious to the last, and his death was so easy that, though we had all been sitting around the bed for an hour or more expecting that event (as we had sat before), he was gone at last almost before we were aware of it.

I am glad to read what you say about his social nature. I think I may say that he was wholly unpretending; and there was this peculiarity in his aim, that, though he had pecuniary difficulties to contend with the greater part of his life, he studied merely how to make a *good* article, pencil or other (for he practised various arts), and was never satisfied with what he had produced. Nor was he ever in the least disposed to put off a poor one for the sake of pecuniary gain, — as if he labored for a higher end.

Though he was not very old, and was not a native of Concord, I think that he was, on the whole, more identified with Concord Street than any man now alive, having come here when he was about twelve years old, and set up for himself as a merchant here at the age of twenty-one, fifty years ago. As I sat in a circle the other evening with my mother and sister, my mother's two sisters and my father's two sisters, it occurred to me that my father, though seventy-one, belonged to the youngest four of the eight who recently composed our family.

How swiftly at last, but unnoticed, a generation passes away! Three years ago I was called with my father to be a witness to the signing of our neighbor Mr. Frost's will. Mr. Samuel Hoar, who was there writing it, also signed it. I was lately required to go to Cambridge to testify to the genuineness of the will, being the only one of the four who could be there, and now I am the only one alive.

My mother and sister thank you heartily for your sympathy. The latter, in particular, agrees with

you in thinking that it is communion with still living and healthy nature alone which can restore to sane and cheerful views. I thank you for your invitation to New Bedford, but I feel somewhat confined here for the present.

I did not know but we should see you the day after Alger was here. It is not too late for a winter walk in Concord. It does me good to hear of spring birds, and singing ones too, for spring seems far away from Concord yet. I am going to Worcester to read a parlor lecture on the 22d, and shall see Blake and Brown. What if you were to meet me there, or go with me from here? You would see them to good advantage. Cholmondeley has been here again, after going as far south as Virginia, and left for Canada about three weeks ago. He is a good soul, and I am afraid that I did not sufficiently recognize him.

Please remember me to Mrs. Ricketson and to the rest of your family.

Yours, HENRY D. THOREAU.

THE SHANTY, Sunday A. M., 6 March, 1859.

RESPECTED FRIEND, — This fine spring morning with its cheering influences brings you to my mind; for I always associate you with the most genial aspects of our beloved Nature, with the woods, the fields, lakes and rivers, with the birds and flowers. As I write, the meadow lark is piping sweetly in the meadows near by, and lo! at this instant, the very first I have heard this season, a bluebird has war-

bled on a tree near the Shanty. What salutation could be more welcome or more in unison with my subject? Yesterday, my son Walton saw and heard the red-winged Blackbird, and this morning robins are flying about. The song-sparrow (F. melodia) now singing, has also been in tune since the 23d of February. Truly may we say, "Spring is come!"

At my present writing, the thermometer at my north window indicates 44 degrees and is rising; yesterday P. M. 50 degrees, wind W. S. W. It seems to me quite time to stop the abuse of our climate. In my boyhood and even until after my marriage (1834), I do not remember it ever occurred to me but that our climate was a very good one. And had I never heard it complained of by others, should hardly have ever suspected it otherwise. A climate that has sustained such men as R. W. E., A. B. A., H. D. T., and other kindred natures, can't be a very bad one, and may be the very best.

March is to me *the month of hope*. I always look forward to its coming with pleasure, and welcome its arrival. Others may speak of it in terms of reproach, but to me it has much to recommend itself. The backbone of winter, according to the homely adage, is now broken. Every day brings us nearer to the vernal influences, to the return of the birds and the appearance of wild flowers. Mingled with storms are many warm sunny days. I am no longer in haste for finer weather, so near at hand. Each day has something to interest me, and even in a severe snow or rain-storm, accompanied

with cold weather, I know that the glorious sun, when once he shines again, will dispel all gloom and soften the temperature. Although it is my custom to walk in the woods, fields, and by-places at all seasons of the year and in all weathers, the spring (and in this I include March as fairly belonging) is my most favorite time. Nature, ever attractive to me, is at this season particularly inviting, the kind solace and hope of my days. Although I am but an indifferent versifier, yet I fancy but few poets have experienced richer or happier emotions than myself from her benign spirit.

I am most happy to record, at this time, that I have, I trust, recovered my good spirits, such as blessed me in my earlier years of manhood. I shall endeavor by a life of purity and retirement to keep them as the choicest of blessings. My desires, I believe, are moderate, and not beyond my reach. So far as the false luxuries of life are concerned, I have but little taste for them, and I would willingly dispense with almost every unnecessary article in the economy of living, for the sake of being the master of my own time, and the leisure to pursue the simple occupations and enjoyments of rural life. I do not covet wealth, I certainly do not wish it. With the intelligent and worthy poor, I feel far greater sympathy and affinity, than with a large portion of the rich and falsely great. I would give more for one day with the poet-peasant, Robert Burns, or Shakespeare, than for unnumbered years of entertainment at the tables of proud and rich men.

"Behind the plough Burns sang his wood-notes wild,
And richest Shakespeare was a poor man's child."

So sung Ebenezer Elliot, the Corn-law rhymer, himself a true poet and friend of the "virtuous and struggling poor."

I copy the foregoing, suggested by the season, from my Daily Journal, on the entrance of March. You may, therefore, read it as a soliloquy, by which it may savor less of egotism and bombast, to which objections it might otherwise be open.

During my walk, yesterday P. M., in a sunny spot, I found the "pussy willows" (S. eriocephala) and enclose one of the "catkins" or "woolly aments" in testimony thereof. I also enclose a pansy from the south side of the Shanty. How should I rejoice to have you as the companion of my walks!

I suppose you have some time since returned from your literary *exploit* into Worcester, and trust that you had a good time with your disciples, Blake, and Brown. They must be *thoreauly* brown by this time. "Arcades ambo" under your pupilage — though, I think, the classic term applies better to you and R. W. E. or W. E. C. May I not also claim as a birthright to rank in your fraternity, as a disciple, at least? Please not reject me. Failing in you I shall be bankrupt, indeed. Shall echo respond, to my complaint, "Is there none for me in the wide world, — no kindred spirit?" "None"?

Don't be alarmed, "Amicus Mihi," you shall be as free as air for aught me.

During the past winter I have been reviewing

somewhat my law studies, and what will not a little surprise you, have received and accepted a commission as justice of the peace. I have collected the relic of my law library, and ranged them in formidable array upon a shelf in the Shanty. I find myself much better able to grasp and cope with these legal worthies than when a young man.

I don't suppose I shall do much in the way of my profession, but may assist occasionally the injured in the recovery of their rights. I have not done this hastily, as you may suppose. I intend to be free from all trammels, and believing, as I do, that law, or rather government, was made for the weal of all concerned, and particularly for the protection of the weak against the strong, and that, according to Blackstone, "What is not reason is not law," I shall act accordingly if I act at all.

I may make use of the elective franchise, but of this am as yet undetermined. It seems to me as though a crisis was approaching in the affairs of our government, when the use of every means that "God and nature affords" will be required to oppose tyranny. I trust that I shall have your sympathy in this matter.

I shall seek no opportunity for the exercise of my opposition, but "*bide my time.*"

A visit from you would be very welcome. With kind regards to your household and my Concord friends, one and all, I remain,

Yours truly, D. R.

Yours of 12th Feb. came duly to hand.

THE SHANTY, Oct. 14, 1859.

FRIEND THOREAU, — Shall I break our long silence, silence so much more instructive than any words I may utter? Yet should my rashness procure a response from you, I, at least, may be the wiser. Solemn though the undertaking be, I would fain venture.

Well, *imprimis*, you have been talking, as I learn from various sources, in Boston. I hope you were understood, in some small measure, at least, though I fear not; but this is not your business — to find understanding for your audience. I respect your benevolence in thus doing, for I esteem it one of the most gracious and philanthropic deeds, for a wise, thoughtful man, a philosopher, to attempt, at least, to awaken his fellow men from their drunken somnolence, perhaps to elevate them.

> "But unimproved, Heaven's noblest brows are vain,
> No sun with plenty crowns the uncultured vale;
> Where green lakes languish on the silent plain,
> Death rides the billows of the western gale."

What are we to think of a world that has had a Socrates, a Plato, a Christ for its teachers, and yet remaining in such outer darkness?

It appears to me it is only, age after age, the working over of the old original compound — man. We appear to gain nothing. A few noble, wise ones, mark the lustrums of the past — a few also will mark what we call the present. The things men rate so highly in modern times do not appear to me to be of very great value after all. What is

it for a ship to cross the ocean by steam if its passengers have no godlike errand to perform? We have enough to wonder at in Nature already, why seek new wonders?

I have passed some peaceful hours of late, sawing wood by moonlight, in the field near the lane to our cow-pastures — the work does not interfere with, but rather favors meditation, and I have found some solace in the companionship of the woods near by, and the concert of their wind harps.

During my evening walks I hear the flight of passenger birds overhead, probably those of nocturnal habits, as I suppose others rest at this season (Night).

A small flock, only ten wild geese, passed over a few days ago. The *Sylviacola coronata* have arrived from the north, and will remain until driven away by the severe cold. I have often seen them in the company of snow buntings about the house and during snowstorms, but they suffer and often die at such times if the storm be severe. Quails are gradually increasing, though still scarce. Last winter I saw a covey of some twelve or more near here, and occasionally have heard their whistle during the early part of the past summer.

I made the acquaintance of your friends, Blake and Brown, very favorably at the Middleborough ponds, last June, on their way to Cape Cod. I had, however, seen Mr. Blake once before.

I should be happy to have a visit from you. Can you not come soon?

I have passed through some deep experiences since I last saw you. We are getting nearer. Is there not such a fact as human companionship? I need not add how much I owe you, and that I remain, faithfully your friend, D. R.

Bluebirds are still here, and meadow-larks are tuneful.

THE SHANTY, 15 Jan., 1860.

FRIEND THOREAU, — We 've been having a good deal of wintry weather for our section of late, and skating by both sexes is a great fashion. On the 26th of last month, Arthur, Walton, and I skated about fifteen miles. We rode out to the south end of Long pond (Aponoquet), and leaving our horse at a farmer's barn, put on our skates, and went nearly in a straight line to the north end of said pond, up to the old herring weir of King Philip, where we were obliged to take off our skates, as the passage to Assawamset was not frozen. We stopped about an hour at the old tavern and had a good solid anti-slavery, and John Brown talk with some travellers. One, a square-set, red-bearded farmer, said among other rough things, that *he would like to eat Southerners' hearts! and drink their blood! for a fortnight, and would be willing to die if he could not live on this fare!* This was said in reply to a spruce young fellow who had been in New Orleans, and *knew all about slavery* — damned the abolitionists most lustily, and John Brown and his associates in particular. Oaths flew like shot from one side to the other, but the renegade Northerner

was no match for the honest farmer, who met him at every point with facts, statistics, oaths, and arguments, and finally swore his antagonist down flat. He "burst the bully" in good earnest. Occasionally I had interspersed a few words, and others present, but our farmer was the champion of the field, and a more complete annihilation of a dough-face I never witnessed.

My boys seemed to enjoy it well. After this scene we again assumed our skates from the Assawamset shore, near by, and skated down to the end of the East Quitticus pond, the extreme southern end of the ponds; thence crossing to West Quitticus, we skated around it, which with the return from the south end of the former pond to our crossing place, we estimated at something over 15 miles. Taking off our skates we took a path through the woods, and walking about a mile came out in some old fields near our starting point. We put on our skates at 10.30 o'clock A. M., and at 3 P. M. were eating dinner at the old farm-house of William A. Morton, near the south shore of Long Pond.

I, as well as my boys, enjoyed the excursion very much. We saw our favorite pond under entirely new aspects, and visited many nooks that we had never before seen — sometimes under the boughs of the old cedars, draped in long clusters of moss, like bearded veterans, and anon farther out on the bosom of the lake, with broad and refreshing views of wild nature, taking the imagination back to the times of the Indians and early settlers of these parts — shoot-

ing by little islands and rocky islets, among them the one called "Lewis Island," which you thought would do for a residence. I got a fresh hold of life that day, and hope to repeat the pleasure before winter closes his reign. I found myself not only not exhausted, as I had expected, but unusually fresh and cheerful on my arrival home about 5 P. M. The boys stood it equally well. So my friend we shall not allow you all the glory of the skating field, but must place our Aponoquet, Assawamset and Quitticas–et, in the skating account with your own beloved Musketaquid exploits.

Well, since I saw you, dear old John Brown has met, and O! how nobly, his death, at the hands of Southern tyrants. I honor him and his brave associates in my "heart of hearts;" but my voice is for peaceable measures henceforth, doubtful, alas! as their success appears.

I expect to be in Boston at the annual meeting of the Mass. A. S. Society, near at hand, and hope to see you there, and if agreeable should like to have you return home with me, when, D. V., we may try our skates on the Middleborough ponds.

We all spoke of you and wished you were with us on our late excursion there.

With kind regards to your family and my other Concord friends, I remain,

Yours faithfully,

D. RICKETSON.

H. D. THOREAU, Concord.

The Shanty, Oct. 14, 1860.

Friend Thoreau, — Am I to infer from your silence that you decline any farther correspondence and intercourse with me? Or is it that having nothing in particular to communicate you deem silence the wiser course? Yet, between friends, to observe a certain degree of consideration is well, and as I wrote you last, and that some nine or ten months ago, inviting you to visit me, I have often felt disappointed and hurt by your almost sepulchral silence towards me.

I am aware that I have no claims upon you, that I voluntarily introduced myself to your notice, and that from the first you have always behaved toward me with a composure which leads me not to judge too severely your present neutrality. I know also that I have but little to give you in return for the edification and pleasure I have derived from your society, and of which to be deprived not only myself but my family would deem a great and irreparable loss. I readily admit that this gives me no claim upon your friendship, but having passed so much of my life in the want of rural companionship I cannot easily surrender the opportunity of occasionally conversing and rambling among the scenes of our beloved neighborhood, here and at Concord, with you. I trust you will now pardon me for again obtruding myself upon you. I am not accustomed to be humble, nor do I intend to be at this time, for I am not conscious of having committed any offence of sufficient magnitude to forfeit your regard for me.

I would, however, state, that you have probably never seen me under the most favorable circumstances, that is, in my *calmest* hours. I am by nature very easily disturbed, mentally and physically, and this tendency, or infirmity, has been increased by smoking. I have, at last, abandoned the use of the weed. It is now about four months since I have made any use whatever of tobacco, and nearly a year since I began to battle seriously with this enemy of my soul's and body's peace. When I was last at Concord, owing to bad sleep, and the consequent nervous irritability aggravated by smoking, I was particularly out of order, and like an intoxicated or crazed man, hardly responsible for my conduct. Wherefore, if I betrayed any want of kind or gentlemanly feeling, which, I fear, may have been the case, I trust you will pardon the same and attribute it to a source not normal with me.

In conclusion, I would add that it would give me much pleasure to continue our friendship and occasional intimacy. Still I would not press it, for in so doing I should be selfish, as I have so little to return you for your favors. But ah! me, what is this life worth, if those of congenial tastes and pursuits cannot exchange common courtesies with each other?

Channing is occasionally in New Bedford, but he never comes to see me, nor writes me. I endeavored to be to him a good friend, and his cold, strange ways hurt and grieve me. Would to God that he were able to be true to his higher nature, so beautiful and intelligent.

It is possible you may not have got the last letter I wrote you, which was in December last, if so, the cause of your silence will prove less painful to me.

I write under embarrassment, and must trust to your generosity for the want of felicity of expression in my attempt to convey to you my estimation of the value of your friendship, and my unwillingness to lose it.

I remain, truly and faithfully your friend,

D. Ricketson.

Concord, November 4, 1860.

Friend Ricketson, — I thank you for the verses. They are quite too good to apply to me. However, I know what a poet's license is, and will not get in the way.

But what do you mean by that prose? Why will you waste so many regards on me, and not know what to think of my silence? Infer from it what you might from the silence of a dense pine wood. It is its natural condition, except when the winds blow, and the jays scream, and the chickaree winds up his clock. My silence is just as inhuman as that, and no more.

You know that I never promised to correspond with you, and so, when I do, I do more than I promised.

Such are my pursuits and habits, that I rarely go abroad; and it is quite a habit with me to decline invitations to do so. Not that I could not enjoy such visits, if I were not otherwise occupied. I have

enjoyed very much my visits to you, and my rides in your neighborhood, and am sorry that I cannot enjoy such things oftener; but life is short, and there are other things also to be done. I admit that you are more social than I am, and far more attentive to "the common courtesies of life;" but this is partly for the reason that you have fewer or less exacting private pursuits.

Not to have written a note for a year, is with me a very venial offence. I think that I do not correspond with any one so often as once in six months.

I have a faint recollection of your invitation referred to; but I suppose that I had no new nor particular reason for declining, and so made no new statement. I have felt that you would be glad to see me almost whenever I got ready to come; but I only offer myself as a rare visitor, and a still rarer correspondent.

I am very busy, after my fashion, little as there is to show for it, and feel as if I could not spend many days nor dollars in travelling; for the shortest visit must have a fair margin to it, and the days thus affect the weeks, you know. Nevertheless, we cannot forego these luxuries altogether.

You must not regard me as a regular diet, but at most only as acorns, which, too, are not to be despised, — which, at least, we love to think are edible in a bracing walk. We have got along pretty well together in several directions, though we are such strangers in others.

I hardly know what to say in answer to your letter.

Some are accustomed to write many letters, others very few. I am one of the last. At any rate, we are pretty sure, if we write at all, to send those thoughts which we cherish to that one, who, we believe, will most religiously attend to them.

This life is not for complaint, but for satisfaction. I do not feel addressed by this letter of yours. It suggests only misunderstanding. Intercourse may be good; but of what use are complaints and apologies? Any complaint *I* have to make is too serious to be uttered, for the evil cannot be mended.

Turn over a new leaf.

My out-door harvest this fall has been one Canada lynx, a fierce looking fellow, which, it seems, we have hereabouts; eleven barrels of apples from trees of my own planting; and a large crop of white-oak acorns, which I did not raise.

Please remember me to your family. I have a very pleasant recollection of your fireside, and I trust that I shall revisit it; also of your Shanty and the surrounding regions.

Yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

Wednesday, 9 A. M., 27th Feb., 1861.

DEAR THOREAU, —

"The bluebird has come, now let us rejoice!
This morning I heard his melodious voice."

But a more certain herald of spring, the pigeon woodpecker, a few of which remain with us during the winter, has commenced his refreshing call.

While I sit writing with my Shanty door open I hear, too, the sweet notes of the meadow-lark, which also winters here, and regales us with his song nearly every fine morning. I have seen and heard the blackbird flying over, not his song, but crackle; the redwing, I doubt not he is quite garrulous in the warmer nooks of low and open woodlands and bushy pastures. There goes the woodpecker, rattling away on his "penny trumpet!"

It is one of those exquisitely still mornings when all nature, without and within, seems at peace. Sing away, dear bluebird! My soul swells with gratitude to the great Giver of all good and beautiful things. As I go to my Shanty door to dry my ink in the sun, I see swarms of little flies in the air near by. The crows are cawing from the more distant pine-woods, where you and I and my other dear poetic friends have walked together. Now I hear the lonely whistle of the black-cap, followed by his strange counterpart in song, the "chickadee" chorus.

2 P. M. Wind S. W. Thermometer 52 deg. in shade. I suppose that you are also enjoying somewhat of this spring influence, if not as fully as we. The winter has passed away thus far quite comfortably with us, and though not severe, with a few occasional exceptions, yet we have had a good deal of good skating, which has been well improved by both sexes, old and young. My sons and I again made a circuit of the Middleborough ponds on the 17th December, at which we should have liked

very much your company. Our river has also been frozen strong enough, and we have had several afternoons' skating there, visiting our friends below on the Fairhaven side. It was really a cheerful sight to see the large number — sometimes a thousand or more — enjoying the pastime and recreation. Many of our young women skate well, and among them our Emma. Walton makes his own skates, and really elegant affairs are they, and he is also very agile upon them. We have a large ship building a little below us, but far enough off not to interfere with the inland quiet of my rambles along shore, which I sometimes take in foggy weather, when I suppose I am little more of a Hollander than usual.

As my object was principally to announce the bluebird, which may have reached you by the time this letter shall, I will soon close. March is close at hand again, and may be here by the time you read this. It is "a welcome month to me." I call it the month of hope, and can patiently wait for the spring flowers and the songs of birds so near by. Soon the willow will put forth its catkins, and your friends the piping or peeping frogs set up their vernal choir, so gentle and soothing to the wounded spirit, where there is also a poetic ear to listen to it.

4 P. M. I fear, after all, that this will prove rather a disjointed letter, for I have been interrupted several times in its progress. During the intervals I have been to town — helped load a hay-wagon with hay, and am just returned from a short drive with my wife and daughters. The only objects of

particular attraction were the pussies or catkins on the willows along the lower part of the Nash road, and the aments of the alder, the latter not much advanced.

Now that spring is so near at hand may I not expect to see you here once more? Truly pleasant would it be to ramble about with you, or sit and chat in the Shanty or with the family around our common hearthstone.

I send you this day's Mercury with a letter and editorial (I suppose) of Channing's.

Hoping to hear from you soon, or, what is better, to see you here, I remain,

Yours truly,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

H. D. THOREAU.

Your welcome letter of Nov. 4th last was duly received. I regret that mine which prompted it should have proved mystical to you. We must "bear and forbear" with each other.

CONCORD, March 22, 1861.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — The bluebird was here the 26th of February at least, which is one day earlier than your date; but I have not heard of larks nor pigeon-woodpeckers. To tell the truth, I am not on the alert for the signs of spring, not having had any winter yet. I took a severe cold about the 3d of December, which at length resulted in a kind of bronchitis, so that I have been confined to the house ever since, excepting a very few experimental

trips as far as the post-office in some particularly mild noons. My health otherwise has not been affected in the least, nor my spirits. I have simply been imprisoned for so long, and it has not prevented my doing a good deal of reading and the like.

Channing has looked after me very faithfully; says he has made a study of my case, and knows me better than I know myself, etc., etc. Of course, if I knew how it began, I should know better how it would end. I trust that when warm weather comes I shall begin to pick up my crumbs. I thank you for your invitation to come to New Bedford and will bear it in mind; but at present my health will not permit my leaving home.

The day I received your letter, Blake and Brown arrived here, having walked from Worcester in two days, though Alcott, who happened in soon after, could not understand what pleasure they found in walking across the country at this season, when the ways were so unsettled. I had a solid talk with them for a day and a half, — though my pipes were not in good order, — and they went their way again.

You may be interested to hear that Alcott is at present, perhaps, the most successful man in town. He had his second annual exhibition of all the schools in the town at the town hall last Saturday, at which all the masters and misses did themselves great credit, as I hear, and of course reflected some on their teachers and parents. They were making

their little speeches from one till six o'clock P. M. to a large audience, which patiently listened to the end. In the meanwhile, the children made Mr. Alcott an unexpected present of a fine edition of "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Herbert's Poems," which, of course, overcame all parties. I inclose our order of exercises.

We had last night an old-fashioned northeast snowstorm, far worse than anything in the winter, and the drifts are now very high above the fences. The inhabitants are pretty much confined to their houses, as I was already. All houses are one color, — white, with the snow plastered over them, and you cannot tell whether they have blinds or not. Our pump has another pump, its ghost, as thick as itself, sticking to one side of it. The town has sent out teams of eight oxen each, to break out the roads; and the train due from Boston at $8\frac{1}{2}$ A. M. has not arrived yet (4 P. M.). All the passing has been a train from above at 12 M., which also was due at $8\frac{1}{2}$ A. M. Where are the bluebirds now, think you? I suppose that you have not so much snow at New Bedford, if any.

Yours,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

CONCORD, August 15, 1861.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — When your last letter was written I was away in the far Northwest, in search of health. My cold turned to bronchitis, which made me a close prisoner almost up to the moment of my

starting on that journey, early in May. As I had an incessant cough, my doctor told me that I must "clear out" — to the West Indies, or elsewhere — so I selected Minnesota. I returned a few weeks ago, after a good deal of steady travelling, considerably, yet not essentially, better; my cough still continuing. If I don't mend very quickly, I shall be obliged to go to another climate again very soon.

My ordinary pursuits, both indoor and out, have been for the most part omitted, or seriously interrupted, — walking, boating, scribbling, etc. Indeed, I have been sick so long that I have almost forgotten what it is to be well; and yet I feel that it is in all respects only my envelope. Channing and Emerson are as well as usual; but Alcott, I am sorry to say, has for some time been more or less confined by a lameness, perhaps of a neuralgic character, occasioned by carrying too great a weight on his back while gardening.

On returning home, I found various letters awaiting me; among others, one from Cholmondeley, and one from yourself.

Of course I am sufficiently surprised to hear of your conversion; yet I scarcely know what to say about it, unless that, judging by your account, it appears to me a change which concerns yourself peculiarly, and will not make you more valuable to mankind. However, perhaps, I must see you before I can judge.

Remembering your numerous invitations, I write this short note now, chiefly to say that, if you are

to be at home, and it will be quite agreeable to you, I will pay you a visit next week, and take such rides or sauntering walks with you as an invalid may.

Yours,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

THE SHANTY, Tuesday 6-h. 20-m. A. M., 17 Sept., '61.

DEAR FRIEND, — I am desirous to hear how you are getting along, although I have an impression that you are improving. I would not put you to the trouble to write me, could I fairly call upon any one else.

I look back with pleasure upon my late visit to Concord. The particularly bright spots are my walks with you to Farmer Hosmer's and to Walden Pond, as well as our visit to friend Alcott.

I should like to have you make us a good long visit before cold weather sets in, and should this meet your approval please inform me when you answer this.

I expect to be absent from home for a few days the last of this month, but after that time I shall be at home for some time.

Our Indian Summer weather is very charming, and probably the air softer than more inland if a season so delightful has any difference in this section of New England.

I suppose you have hardly needed a fresh doctor since the bountiful supply I brought you. I was much pleased at the unceremonious way in which you described him. I hope the dread of another

holocaust of the same kind will keep you in good heart for some time, for, assuredly, as soon as you begin to complain, which is hardly possible, after so great a feast as you have had of late, a bigger victim will be forthcoming upon whom the eagle-eye of some friend of yours is already fixed.

You will pardon my seeming levity, and attribute it to the fresh morning air and increasing health and spirits. I have tasted no sugar-plums of any kind since I left you. I thank you for the friendly caution. I need more. Come then, and be my kind Mentor still further.

With kind regards to all your family and to Mr. Alcott, Channing, Hosmer, &c.

Yours truly,

D. Ricketson.

P. S. Mrs. Ricketson and our daughters join in regards and invitation to visit us soon. You will be welcome at any time. This is a good time to ride out to the ponds, &c. We are having beautiful weather here, calm and mild.

Please ask Channing if he received a book I sent him in care of Dr. W. Channing, Boston.

Concord, Oct. 14, 1861.

Friend Ricketson, — I think that, on the whole, my health is better than when you were here ; and my faith in the doctors has not increased. I thank you all for your invitation to come to New Bedford, but I suspect that it must still be warmer here than there ; that, indeed, New Bedford is warmer than

Concord Oct 14 '67

Friend Rickelson

I think that, on the whole, my health is better than when you were here; & my faith in the Doctors has not decreased.

I thank you all for your invitation to come to New Bedford, but I suspect that it must still be warmer here than there, that is, near New Bedford is warmer than Concord only in the winter, so I abide by Concord.

Westchester was pleasant & much better for me than Augusta, and October here has been quite

tolerable. Instead of riding on horseback, I take a ride in a wagon about every other day. My neighbor, Mr Hoar, has two horses, she being away for the most part this fall has generously offered me the use of one of them; and as I notice, the dog throws himself in, and does scouting duty.

I am glad to hear that you no longer chew, but eschew, sugar plums. One of the worst effects of sickness even is, that it may get one into the habit of taking a little something, his bitters or sweets, as if for his bodily good from time to time, when he does not need it. However, there is no

danger of this if you do not dose even when you are sick.

I met with a Mr Rod man, a young man of your town, here the other day — or week, looking at farms for sale, and rumor says that he is inclined to buy a particular one.

C. says that he received his book, but has not got any of yours.

It is easy to talk, but hard to write.

From the worst of all correspondents

Henry D. Thoreau

Concord only in the winter, and so I abide by Concord.

September was pleasanter and much better for me than August, and October has thus far been quite tolerable. Instead of riding on horseback, I take a ride in a wagon about every other day. My neighbor, Mr. Hoar, has two horses, and he, being away for the most part this fall, has generously offered me the use of one of them; and, as I notice, the dog throws himself in, and does scouting duty.

I am glad to hear that you no longer chew, but eschew, sugar-plums. One of the worst effects of sickness is, that it may get one into the *habit* of taking a little something — his bitters or sweets, as if for his bodily good — from time to time, when he does not need it. However, there is no danger of this if you do not dose even when you are sick.

I went with a Mr. Rodman, a young man of your town, here the other day, or week, looking at farms for sale, and rumor says that he is inclined to buy a particular one. Channing says that he received his book, but has not got any of yours.

It is easy to talk, but hard to write.

From the worst of all correspondents,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

(Last letter written by Mr. Thoreau.)

BROOKLAWN, 7th Jan., 1862.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I thought you would like to have a few lines from me, providing they required no answer.

I have quite recovered from my illness, and am able to walk and skate as usual. My son, Walton, and I do both nearly every day of late. The weather here — as I suppose has been the case with you at Concord — has been very cold, the thermometer as low one morn (Saturday last) as five degrees above zero.

We propose soon to take our annual tour on skates over the Middleboro' ponds.

I received your sister's letter in reply to mine inquiring after your health. I was sorry to hear of your having pleurisy, but it may prove favorable after all to your case, as a counter-irritant often does to sick people. It appears to me you will in time recover — Nature can't spare you, and we all, your friends, can't spare you. So you must look out for us and hold on these many years yet.

I wish I could see you oftener. I don't believe in your silence and absence from congenial spirits. Companionship is one of the greatest blessings to me.

Remember me kindly to my valued friends Mr. and Mrs. Alcott.

Yours truly, in haste,

D. R.

P. S. Thank your sister for her letter.

At any time when you wish to visit us, just send a line. You are always welcome.

SPRING NOTES.

New Bedford, 23d March, '62.

My dear Friend, — As it is some time since I wrote you, I have thought that as a faithful chronicler of the season in this section, I would announce to you the present stage of our progress. I will not begin with the origin of creation as many worthy historians are wont, but would say that we have had a pretty steady cold winter through the months of January and February, but since the coming in of March the weather has been mild, though for the past week cloudy and some rain. Today the wind is southerly and the thermometer — 3 P. M. — 46°, north side of our house. A flock of wild geese flew over about an hour ago, which I viewed with my spy-glass — their course about due east. Few things give me a stronger sense of the sublime than the periodical flight of these noble birds. Bluebirds arrived here about a fortnight ago, but a farmer who lives about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from here north, says he heard them on the 7th Feb'y. I hear the call of the golden winged woodpecker, and the sweet notes of the meadow lark in the morning, and yesterday morning for the first time this spring, we were saluted with the song of a robin in a tree near our house. The song sparrow has been calling the *maids to hang on their teakettles* for several weeks, and this morning I heard the *crackle* of the cow-bunting. I must not forget, too, that last evening

I heard the ground notes *speed, speed* of the woodcock and his warbling while descending from his spiral flight. The catkins begin to expand upon the willows, and the grass in warm and rich spots to look green.

Truly spring is here, and each day adds to the interest of the season. I hope you will catch a share of its healthful influences; at least feast upon the stock you have in store, for as friend Alcott says, in his quaint way, you have all weathers within you. Am I right in my intimations that you are mending a little, and that you will be able once more to resume your favorite pursuits so valuable to us all as well as to yourself? May I not hope to see you the coming season at Brooklawn where you are always a welcome guest? I see that you are heralded in the Atlantic for April, and find a genial appreciative notice of you under the head of "Forester," which I suppose comes from either Alcott or Emerson, and Channing's lines at the close, which I was also glad to see.

I am reading a very interesting book called "Footnotes from the page of Nature, or first forms of vegetation." By Rev. Hugh Macmillan, Cambridge and London, 1861. It treats of Mosses, Lichens, Fresh Water Algæ and Fungi. The author appears to be rich in lore and writes in an easy manner with no pretension to science. Don't fail to read it if you can obtain it. It is lent me by a friendly naturalist.

Hoping to hear of your improved state of health,

and with the affectionate regards of my whole family, as well as my own,

I remain, dear friend,

Yours faithfully,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

P. S. I notice that Walden is to appear in a second edition, and hope that your publishers will consider your interests as well as their own. Would they not like to buy your unbound copies of "The Week"?

THE SHANTY, BROOKLAWN, 30 March, 1862.

DEAR THOREAU, — Alone, and idle here this pleasant Sunday P. M., I thought I might write you a few lines, not that I expect you to answer, but only to bring myself a little nearer to you. I have to chronicle this time, the arrival of the purple Finch, and a number of warblers and songsters of the sparrow tribe.

The spring is coming on nicely here, and to-day it is mild, calm, and sunny. I hope you are able to get out a little and breathe the pure air of your fields and woods. While sawing some pine wood the other day, the fragrance suggested to my mind that you might be benefited by living among, or at least frequenting pine woods. I have heard of people much improved in health who were afflicted in breathing, from this source, and I once seriously thought of taking my wife to the pine woods between here and Plymouth, or rather between Middleborough

and Plymouth, where the pine grows luxuriantly in the dry yellow ground of that section.

I have thought you might, if still confined, transport yourself in imagination or spirit to your favorite haunts, which might be facilitated by taking a piece of paper and mapping out your usual rambles around Concord, making the village the centre of the chart and giving the name of each part, marking out the roads and footpaths as well as the more prominent natural features of the country.

I have had two unusually *dreamy* nights — last and the one before. Last night I was climbing mountains with some accidental companion, and among the dizzy heights when near the top I saw and pointed out to my fellow-traveller two enormous birds flying over our heads. These birds soon increased, and, from being as I at first supposed eagles of great size, became griffins! as large as horses, their huge bodies moved along by broad-spread wings. The dream continued, but the remainder is as the conclusion of most dreams in strange contrast. I found myself passing through a very narrow and filthy village street, the disagreeable odor of which so quickened my speed as to either awake me or cut off my dream. At any rate, when I awoke my head was aching and I was generally exhausted. But enough of this.

Two young men in a buggy-wagon have just driven up the road singing in very sonorous strains the "John Brown" chorus. I wish its pathetic and heart-stirring appeals could reach the inward ears of

Congress and the President. I hope you can see some light on our present benighted way, for I cannot except by the exercise of my faith in an overruling Providence.

I may write you again soon, and hope I do not tire you.

With kind regards to your family and my other Concord friends, I remain,

Yours affectionately,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

P. S. I have just seen a cricket in the path near the house. Flies are very lively in my shanty windows. Two flocks wild geese just passed, 4 P. M., N. E. by N. Honk-honk! Honk-honk!

THE SHANTY, April 6th, 1862.

My DEAR PHILOMATH, — Another Sunday has come round, and as usual I am to be found in the Shanty, where I should also be glad to have you bodily present.

We have had a little interruption to our fine weather during the past week in the shape of a hail-storm yesterday P. M. and evening, but it is clear again to-day, though cooler.

I have to *Kronikle* the arrival of the white-bellied swallow and the commencement of the frog choir, which saluted my ear for the first time on the evening of the 3d inst. The fields are becoming a little greener, and the trailing moss is already waving along the sides of the rivulets. I have n't walked much, however, as I have been busy about farm

work, the months of April and May being my busiest time, but as my real business is with Nature, I do not let any of these "side issues" lead me astray. How serenely and grandly amid the din of arms Nature preserves her integrity, nothing moved; with the return of spring come the birds and the flowers, the swollen streams go dancing on, and all the laws of the great solar system are perfectly preserved. How wise, how great, must be the Creator and Mover of it all! But I descend to the affairs of mortals, which particularly concern us at this time. I do not think that the people of the North appear to be awakened, enlightened, rather, to their duty in this great struggle. I fear that there is a great deal of treachery which time will alone discover and remove, for the Right must eventually prevail. Can we expect when we consult the page of history that this revolution will be more speedily terminated than others of a like nature? The civil war of England lasted, I think, some ten years, and the American Revolution some seven or eight years, besides the years of antecedent agitation. We have no Cromwell, unless Wendell Phillips shall by and by prove one; but at present he rather represents Hampden, whose mournful end was perhaps a better one than to be killed by a rotten-egg mob. The voice of Hogopolis (the mob portion of Cincinnati), if such grunts can be thus dignified, must prove a lasting disgrace. The government party, if we have a government, seems to continue with a saintly perseverance their faith in General McClellan. How

much longer this state of delay will continue to be borne it is difficult to foresee, but I trust the force of circumstances (*sub Deo*) will soon require a move for the cause of liberty.

I read but little of the newspaper reports of the war, rather preferring to be governed by the general characteristics of the case, as they involuntarily affect my mind.

4 P. M. Since writing the foregoing, somewhat more than an hour ago, I have taken a stroll with my son Walton and our dog through the woods and fields west of our house, where you and I have walked several times; the afternoon is sunny and of mild temperature, but the wind from the N. W. rather cool, rendering overcoat agreeable. Our principal object was to look at lichens and mosses, to which W. is paying some attention. We started up a woodcock at the south edge of the woods, and a large number of robins in a field adjoining, also pigeon-woodpeckers, and heard the warble of bluebirds.

I remain, with faith in the sustaining forces of Nature and Nature's God,

Yours truly and affectionately,

DANIEL RICKETSON.

HENRY D. THOREAU,
CONCORD, MASS.

THE SHANTY, BROOKLAWN, 13th April, 1862.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I received a letter from your dear Sister a few days ago, informing me of your continued illness and prostration of physical strength,

which I was not altogether unprepared to learn, as our valued friend Mr. Alcott wrote me by your sister's request in February last, that you were confined at home and very feeble. I am glad, however, to learn from Sophia that you still find comfort and are happy, the reward I have no doubt of a virtuous life, and an abiding faith in the wisdom and goodness of our Heavenly Father. It is undoubtedly wisely ordained that our present lives should be mortal. Sooner or later we must all close our eyes for the last time upon the scenes of this world, and oh! how happy are they who feel the assurance that the spirit shall survive the earthly tabernacle of clay, and pass on to higher and happier spheres of experience.

"It must be so — Plato, thou reasonest well: —
Else, whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality."

(Addison, *Cato.*)

"The soul's dark cottage, battered, and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made:
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,
As they draw near to their eternal home.
Leaving the old both worlds at once they view
Who stand upon the threshold of the new."

(Waller.)

It has been the lot of but few, dear Henry, to extract so much from life as you have done. Although you number fewer years than many who have lived wisely before you, yet I know of no one, either in the past or present times, who has drank so deeply from the sempiternal spring of truth and

knowledge, or who in the poetry and beauty of every-day life has enjoyed more or contributed more to the happiness of others. Truly you have not lived in vain — your works, and above all, your brave and truthful life, will become a precious treasure to those whose happiness it has been to have known you, and who will continue to uphold though with feebler hands the fresh and instructive philosophy you have taught them.

But I cannot yet resign my hold upon you here. I will still hope, and if my poor prayer to God may be heard, would ask, that you may be spared to us a while longer, at least. This is a lovely spring day here — warm and mild — the thermometer in the shade at 62 above zero (3 P. M.). I write with my shanty door open and my west curtain down to keep out the sun, a red-winged blackbird is regaling me with a querulous, half broken song from a neighboring tree just in front of the house, and the gentle southwest wind is soughing through my young pines. Here where you have so often sat with me, I am alone. My dear Uncle James whom you may remember to have seen here, the companion of my woodland walks for more than quarter of a century, died a year ago this month: my boys and girls have grown into men and women, and my dear wife is an invalid still, so, though a pater familias, I often feel quite alone. Years are accumulating upon me, the buoyancy of youth has erewhile departed, and with some bodily and many mental infirmities I sometimes feel that the cords of life are

fast separating. I wish at least to devote the remainder of my life, whether longer or shorter, to the cause of truth and humanity — a life of simplicity and humility. Pardon me for thus dwelling on myself.

Hoping to hear of your more favorable symptoms, but committing you (all unworthy as I am) unto the tender care of the great Shepherd, who "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,"

I remain, my dear friend and counsellor,
Ever faithfully yours,
DAN'L RICKETSON.

P. S. It is *barely* possible I may come to see you on Sat'y next.

THE SHANTY, Sunday, 7.30 A. M.,
4th May, 1862.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have just returned from driving our cow to pasture and assisting in our usual in and outdoor work, the first making a fire in our sitting-room, a little artificial warmth being still necessary for my invalid wife, although I sit most of the time as I do now, with my Shanty door open, and without fire in my stove.

Well, my dear friend and fellow-pilgrim, spring has again come, and here appears in full glow. The farmers are busy and have been for some weeks, ploughing and planting, — the necessity of paying more attention to agriculture being strongly felt in these *hard* times, — old fields and neglected places are now being brought into requisition, and with a

good season our former neglected farms will teem with abundance.

I, too, am busy in my way, but on rather a small scale, principally in my garden and among my fruit trees. Walton, however, is head man, and I am obliged generally to submit to his superior judgment.

About all the birds have returned — the large thrush (T. rufus) arrived here on the 25th last month. I am now daily expecting the catbird and ground robin, and soon the Bob-o-link and golden robin. With the arrival of the two last our vernal choir becomes nearly complete. I have known them both to arrive the same day. Of the great variety of little woodland and wayside warblers, I am familiar with but few, yet some of them are great favorites of mine, particularly the oven bird, warbling vireo, veery (T. Wilsonii), etc., etc. The wind flower and blue violet have been in bloom some time, and I suppose the columbine and wild geranium are also, although I have not been to visit them as yet. How beautiful and how wonderful indeed is the return of life — how suggestive and how instructive to mankind! Truly God is great and good and wise and glorious.

I hope this will find you *mending*, and as I hear nothing to the contrary, I trust that it may be so that you are. I did expect to be able to go to Concord soon; I still may, but at present I do not see my way clear, as we "Friends" say. I often think of you, however, and join hands with you in the

spirit, if not in the flesh, which I hope always to do.

I see by the papers that Concord has found a new voice in the way of a literary journal y'clept "The Monitor," which has my good wishes for its success. I conclude that Mr. Sanborn is the pioneer in this enterprise, who appears to be a healthy nursing child of the old mother of heroes. I do not mean to be classic, and only intend to speak of old Mother Concord. I hope Channing will wake up and give us some of his lucubrations, and father Alcott strike his Orphic lyre once more, and Emerson discourse wisdom and verse from the woods around. There sings a whortleberry sparrow (F. juncorum) from our bush pasture beyond the garden. I hear daily your sparrow (F. Graminus) with his "here! here! there! there! come quick or I 'm gone!" By the way, is not Emerson wrong in his interpretation of the whistle of the Chickadee as "Phœbe"? The low, sweet whistle of the "black cap" is very distinct from the clearly expressed Phœbe of the wood pewee. But I must not be hypercritical with so true a poet and lover of Nature as E.

How grandly is the Lord overruling all for the cause of the slave — defeating the evil machinations of men by the operation of his great universal and regulating laws, by which the universe of mind and matter is governed! I do not look for a speedy termination of the war, although matters look more hopeful, but I cannot doubt but that slavery will soon find its exodus. What a glorious country this will

be for the next generation should this *curse* be removed!

Amid the song of purple finches, robins, meadow-larks, and sparrows — a kind of *T. solitarius* myself — and with a heart full of kind wishes and affection for you, I conclude this hasty epistle.

As ever, yours faithfully,

D. R.

P. S. I believe I answered your sister's kind and thoughtful letter to me.

(Last letter to H. D. T.).

IV

LETTERS OF SOPHIA E. THOREAU AND DANIEL RICKETSON

Her memory makes our common landscape seem
Fairer than any of which painters dream,
Lights the brown hills and sings in every stream.

WHITTIER.

LETTERS OF SOPHIA E. THOREAU AND DANIEL RICKETSON

Concord, Dec. 19, 1861.

Mr. Ricketson:

Dear Sir, — Thank you for your friendly interest in my dear brother. I wish that I could report more favorably in regard to his health.

Soon after your visit to Concord Henry commenced riding, and almost every day he introduced me to some of his familiar haunts, far away in the thick woods or by the ponds, all very new and delightful to me. The air and exercise which he enjoyed during the fine autumn days, was a benefit to him — he seemed stronger — had a good appetite, and was able to attend somewhat to his writing ; but since the cold weather has come his cough has increased and he is able to go out but seldom. Just now he is suffering from an attack of pleurisy which confines him wholly to the house.

His spirits do not fail him, he continues in his usual serene mood, which is very pleasant for his friends as well as himself. I am hoping for a short winter and early spring that the invalid may again be out of doors. I am sorry to hear of your indisposition, and trust that you will be well again soon. It would give me pleasure to see some of

your newspaper articles, since you possess a hopeful spirit.

My patience is very nearly exhausted, the times look *very* dark. I think that the next soldier who is shot for sleeping at his post should be General McClellan. Why does he not do something in the way of fighting? I despair of ever living under the reign of Sumner or Phillips. . . .

Mother joins with me in kind remembrances to yourself and family.

Yours with much esteem,

S. E. Thoreau.

Concord, April 7, 1862.

Mr. Ricketson:

Dear Sir, — I feel moved to acknowledge the pleasant letters which Henry has lately received from you. It is really refreshing to hear of the flight of the wild geese and the singing of birds. There is a good deal of snow still whitening our fields. I am almost impatient to see the ground bare again.

My dear brother has survived the winter, and we should be most thankful if he might linger to welcome the green grass and the flowers once more. Believing as I do in the sincerity of your friendship for Henry, I feel anxious that you should know *how* ill he is. Since the autumn he has been gradually failing, and is now the embodiment of weakness; still, he enjoys seeing his friends, and every bright hour he devotes to his manuscripts which he is preparing for publication. For many weeks he has

spoken only in a faint whisper. Henry accepts this dispensation with such childlike trust and is so happy that I feel as if he were being translated, rather than dying in the ordinary way of most mortals. I hope you will come and see him *soon*, and be cheered. He has often expressed pleasure at the prospect of seeing you.

I asked Mr. Alcott to write to you some weeks since; but I do not think that he impressed you with Henry's true condition. Few of his friends realize how sick he is, his spirits are always so good.

In much haste, believe me,

Yours truly,

S. E. Thoreau.

P. S. Henry sends kind regards to you and your family, and desires me to tell you that he cannot rise to greet a guest, and has not been out for three months.

Sunday May 11th '62.

Mottoes placed in Henry's coffin by his friend W. E. C.: —

"Hail to thee, O man, who art come from the transitory place to the imperishable."

"Gazed on the heavens for what he missed on earth."

"I think for to touche also
The world whiche neweth everie daie,
So as I can, so as I maie."

Dear friend, you will not forget the bereaved mother and sister.

Yours truly,

S. E. Thoreau.

STANZAS

Written to be sung at the Funeral of Henry D. Thoreau, of Concord, Massachusetts (Friday, May 9th, 1862).

Hearest thou the sobbing breeze complain
How faint the sunbeams light the shore, —
His heart more fixed than earth or main,
Henry! that faithful heart is o'er.

Oh, weep not thou thus vast a soul,
Oh, do not mourn this lordly man,
As long as Walden's waters roll,
And Concord River fills a span.

For thoughtful minds in Henry's page
Large welcome find and bless his verse,
Drawn from the poet's heritage,
From wells of right and nature's source.

Fountains of hope and faith! inspire
Most stricken hearts to lift this cross!
His perfect trust shall keep the fire,
His glorious peace disarm all loss!

Wm. E. Channing.

Brooklawn, 13th May, 1862.

My dear Friend, — Please accept my thanks for your kindness in sending me the lines sung at your dear brother's funeral. I did not know of his death until I read it in one of our New Bedford papers Thursday evening, the 8th inst. Although I was not unprepared for the sad event, still I was very seriously moved by the same. I had fondly, you know, cherished the hope that he might still be

spared to us who so much valued him, but he has passed on to a higher and happier sphere of existence. While at work in our garden the other day with my son Walton, I remarked that Henry would never hear the birds sing here again, adding how much we should miss him, and wondering whether he still felt an interest in things of earth. Walton very appropriately and beautifully, as I think, replied that he supposed Henry was interested in looking about upon the new scenes of his present experience. What a glorious field he has for his exquisitely curious mind to work in!

I hope your dear mother finds consolation. You have, I am aware, been often stricken, but I trust are not left hopeless nor comfortless. You spoke of Henry's serenity and resignation. Will you be so kind as to give me a few of the particulars of his latter days, — his expressions and the state of his mind generally, if it be agreeable to you. I should have been glad to have seen Henry again, and had hoped to come up to Concord from Boston at the time of the Anti-Slavery Convention this month. By referring to your letter I see that I should not have deferred it; but it is now too late to perform the last offices of a friendship which I trust was sincere and hope will again be renewed. I have sent some lines entitled "Walden," written some two years ago, to the "Liberator" for publication. I inclose the letter which I refer to in my last to Henry as unsent. I retained it by the advice of my daughters, who thought its tone too mournful, and so in consider-

ation of Henry's feelings I coincided with them. Had I known he was so near the close of his life I should have sent it.

Most certainly I will not forget "the bereaved mother and sister." May I be permitted to mourn with you the loss of one whose peer in virtue and intelligence I never knew! Daily I think of him, and my dear son, Walton, with whom I am now busily engaged in our garden work, often speaks of him; this very afternoon he remarked of Henry's companionship with some congenial spirit, and I suggested Plato.

The public have met with a great loss in Henry's death, — his friends and pupils were increasing, — Concord is sadly bereaved, and his friends, Emerson, Alcott, Channing, Hosmer, and others, must feel it very keenly. I should be glad for you and my daughters to know each other, and I should be happy, as they would, to see you at our house.

I am under many obligations to your kind mother and yourself for kindnesses which I should be happy to reciprocate. I should be glad to hear more about Henry's last experiences, as I have before written.

With my kindest regards and sympathy to your mother and aunts, I remain, my dear friend, for your own as well as for Henry's sake,

Yours faithfully,

Dan'l Ricketson.

P. S. Did my last letter to Henry, dated the 4th inst., reach him in time for him to read it or have it read? I did not think it would be my last to him.

I write amid many interruptions from various callers and visitors.

CONCORD, May 20th, 1862.

MR. RICKETSON:

DEAR FRIEND, — Profound joy mingles with my grief. I feel as if something very beautiful had happened, not death; although Henry is with us no longer, yet the memory of his sweet and virtuous soul must ever cheer and comfort me. My heart is filled with praise to God for the gift of such a brother, and may I never distrust the love and wisdom of Him who made him, and who has now called him to labor in more glorious fields than earth affords.

You ask for some particulars relating to Henry's illness. I feel like saying that Henry was never affected, never reached by it. I never before saw such a manifestation of the power of spirit over matter. Very often I have heard him tell his visitors that he enjoyed existence as well as ever. He remarked to me that there was as much comfort in perfect disease as in perfect health, the mind always conforming to the condition of the body. The thought of death, he said, could not begin to trouble him. His thoughts had entertained him all his life, and did still.

When he had wakeful nights, he would ask me to arrange the furniture so as to make fantastic shadows on the wall, and he wished his bed was in the form of a shell, that he might curl up in it. He considered occupation as necessary for the sick as

for those in health, and has accomplished a vast amount of labor during the past few months in preparing some papers for the press. He did not cease to call for his manuscripts till the last day of his life.

During his long illness I never heard a murmur escape him, or the slightest wish expressed to remain with us; his perfect contentment was truly wonderful. None of his friends seemed to realize how very ill he was, so full of life and good cheer did he seem. One friend, as if by way of consolation, said to him, "Well, Mr. Thoreau, we must all go." Henry replied, "When I was a very little boy I learned that I must die, and I set that down, so of course I am not disappointed now. Death is as near to you as it is to me."

There is very much that I should like to write you about my precious brother, had I time and strength. I wish you to know how very gentle, lovely, and submissive he was in all his ways. His little study bed was brought down into our front parlor, when he could no longer walk with our assistance, and every arrangement pleased him. The devotion of his friends was most rare and touching; his room was made fragrant by the gift of flowers from young and old; fruit of every kind which the season afforded, and game of all sorts was sent him. It was really pathetic, the way in which the town was moved to minister to his comfort. Total strangers sent grateful messages, remembering the good he had done them. All this attention was fully

Concord May 20th 62,

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But not alone, our Heavenly Father was with us. ——— Your last letter reached us by the evening mail on Monday. H. asked me to read it to him; which I did, he enjoyed your letters & felt disappointed not to see you again — Mr Blake & Brown came twice to visit him since January. They were present at his funeral which took place in the church. Mr Emerson read such an address as no other man could have done. It is a source of great satisfaction, that one so gifted knew, & loved, my brother & is prepared to speak such brave words about him at this time. The "Atlantic Monthly" for July will contain Mr E's memoire of Henry. ——— I hope that you saw a notice of the services on Friday, written by Mr Fields, in the "Transcript." Let me thank you for your very friendly letters. I trust we shall see you in Concord, anniversary week. It would give me pleasure to make the acquaintance of your family of whom my brother has so often told me. If convenient, will you please bring the Ambrotype of Henry which was taken last autumn in New Bedford. I am interested to see it. Mr Channing will take the crayon likeness to Boston this week to secure some photographs.

My intention was to apologize for not writing you at this time: but I must now trust to your generosity to pardon this hasty letter, written under a great pressure of cares & amidst frequent interruptions. My mother unites with me in very kind regards to your family

Yours truly S. E. Thoreau

appreciated and very gratifying to Henry; he would sometimes say, "I should be ashamed to stay in this world after so much had been done for me, I could never repay my friends." And they so remembered him to the last. Only about two hours before he left us, Judge Hoar called with a bouquet of hyacinths fresh from his garden, which Henry smelled and said he liked, and a few minutes after he was gone, another friend came with a dish of his favorite jelly.

I can never be grateful enough for the gentle, easy exit which was granted him. At seven o'clock Tuesday morning he became restless and desired to be moved; dear mother, Aunt Louisa, and myself were with him; his self-possession did not forsake him. A little after eight he asked to be raised quite up, his breathing grew fainter and fainter, and without the slightest struggle, he left us at nine o'clock. But not alone. Our Heavenly Father was with us.

Your last letter reached us by the evening mail on Monday. H. asked me to read it to him, which I did. He enjoyed your letters, and felt disappointed not to see you again. Mr. Blake and Brown came twice to visit him since January. They were present at his funeral, which took place in the church. Mr. Emerson read such an address as no other man could have done. It is a source of great satisfaction that one so gifted knew and loved my brother and is prepared to speak such brave words about him at this time. The "Atlantic Monthly" for July will contain Mr. E.'s memorial of Henry.

I hope that you saw a notice of the services on Friday written by Mr. Fields in the "Transcript."

Let me thank you for your very friendly letters. I trust we shall see you in Concord anniversary week. It would give me pleasure to make the acquaintance of your family, of whom my brother has so often told me.

If convenient, will you please bring the ambrotype of Henry which was taken last autumn in New Bedford? I am interested to see it. Mr. Channing will take the crayon likeness to Boston this week to secure some photographs.

My intention was to apologize for *not* writing you at this time: but I must now trust to your generosity to pardon this hasty letter, written under a great pressure of cares and amid frequent interruptions.

My mother unites with me in very kind regards to your family.

Yours truly,

S. E. Thoreau.

Brooklawn, 22d May, 1862.

Dear Miss Thoreau, — Your deeply affecting letter of the 20th inst. relative to Henry's death arrived yesterday. My family as well as myself have read and reread the contents with truly reverential feelings for the beautiful and noble spirit of your brother. You hardly need our sympathy, sustained as you are by a higher and better support than any earthly friend can lend.

Brooklawn, 22d May, 1862

Dear Miss Thoreau,

Your deeply affec
ting letter of the 20th Inst. relative to
Henry's death arrived Yesterday
My family as well as myself have
read and re-read the contents with
truly reverential feelings for the beau-
tiful and noble Spirit of your brother.
You hardly need our sympathy, sustained
as you are by a higher and better support
than any earthly friend can lend.

I am very glad that Henry was so
upheld to the last, and that you appear
to possess the same admirable element
of faith and trust. Still we shall all
miss him, we shall be sensible of a void
which will for us never be filled; and
the fair fields, the woods, and the

he so much loved,
river will loose to many of us their highest interests now he is gone, except such as memory may hold in store for us, of the master spirit that once so graced, and depicted them -

Henry was the roundest man I ever knew - he seemed as near perfect as it is possible for humanity to be. Other men have been great in their particular vocations, but he became master in whatever he grasped -- at once poet, and painter, naturalist, scholar, artisan philanthropist, and withal, and more than all else; so Christ-like in the childlike simplicity and strength of his character. I ruly we shall never behold his peer, and I am so poor and weak, that I must mourn his loss. With the loss of friend after friend and the lessening hold of life in advancing years, I feel the deep necessity of dilligently seeking the

the ground of faith and hope. Possessing not the grand and well balanced mind of your brother, I am still anxiously inquiring the way to life and immortality, and often feel like a poor weary pilgrim on the dusty road. Travel. I am becoming more and more drawn to the faith of my fathers, who were Friends from the days of George Fox, and so much of the old leven remains in me, that I find myself involuntarily as it were drawn into their simple and rational ways of life.

As it is quite uncertain about my going to the State Slavery Convention next week and thence to Concord, I have concluded to send the Ambrotype of Henry by mail. When I heard of your brother's death I went to the "artist who took the picture and got the duplicate of the one I had for you. I send you the strongest

impression the first taken. The one I keep is a little lighter in color, which led me to choose it, but I now see the stronger expression in yours. If you were here I should like for you to take your choice We all consider it very life like and one of the most successful likenesses we ever saw. What is rather remarkable is, that it shew scarcely at all Henry's loss of health, suffering deeply as he was at the time it was taken from his disease. Farewell! dear friend I shall never forget thy noble worth and the many instructive days I have passed in thy companionship. As Milton mourned his beloved Lycidas, So I mourn the loss of dear Henry. Excuse my sad conclusion, and believe me, Ever truly Yours, Dan'l Ricketson

P. S. I should like to hear of the receipt of the Ambrotype, and how you like it.

I am very glad that Henry was so upheld to the last, and that you appear to possess the same admirable element of faith and trust. Still we shall all miss him, we shall be sensible of a void which will for us never be filled; and the fair fields, the woods, and the river he so much loved will lose to many of us their highest interest now he is gone, except such as memory may hold in store for us, of the master spirit that once so graced and depicted them.

Henry was the roundest man I ever knew — he seemed as near perfect as it is possible for humanity to be. Other men have been great in their particular vocations, but he became master in whatever he grasped, — at once poet, and painter, naturalist, scholar, artisan, philanthropist, and withal, and more than all else, so Christlike in the childlike simplicity and strength of his character. Truly, we shall never behold his peer, and I am so poor and weak that I must mourn his loss. With the loss of friend after friend and the lessening hold of life in advancing years, I feel the deep necessity of diligently seeking the true ground of faith and hope. Possessing not the grand and well-balanced mind of your brother, I am still anxiously inquiring the way to life and immortality, and often feel like a poor weary pilgrim on the dusty road I travel. I am becoming more and more drawn to the faith of my fathers, who were Friends from the days of George Fox, and so much of the old leaven remains in me that I find myself involuntarily, as it were, drawn into their simple and rational ways of life.

As it is quite uncertain about my going to the Anti-Slavery Convention next week, and thence to Concord, I have concluded to send the ambrotype of Henry by mail. When I heard of your brother's death, I went to the artist who took the picture and got the duplicate of the one I had for you. I send you the strongest impression, the first taken. The one I keep is a little lighter in color, which led me to choose it, but I now see the stronger expression in yours. If you were here I should like for you to take your choice. We all consider it very lifelike and one of the most successful likenesses we ever saw. What is rather remarkable is that it shews scarcely at all Henry's loss of health, suffering deeply as he was at the time it was taken, from his disease.

Farewell, dear friend! I shall never forget thy noble worth and the many instructive days I have passed in thy companionship. As Milton mourned his beloved Lycidas, so I must mourn the loss of thee, dear Henry!

Excuse my sad conclusion, and believe me,

Ever truly yours,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

P. S. I should like to hear of the receipt of the ambrotype and how you like it.

CONCORD, May 26th, 1862.

MR. RICKETSON:

DEAR FRIEND, — Most heartily do I thank you for the picture of my dear brother which was received on Saturday. It was *very* kind of you to

secure the duplicate for me. Until a few weeks since, I did not know that Henry had his picture taken when in New Bedford last; he accidentally spoke of it, and said that you considered it a good likeness. None of his Daguerreotypes have pleased us, and I did not imagine that the ambrotype would afford us much satisfaction, still I felt curious to see it, thinking I might get a copy of yours in case we liked it.

I need not tell you, for I cannot, how agreeably surprised I was on opening the little box, to find my own lost brother again. I could not restrain my tears. The picture is invaluable to us. I discover a slight shade about the eyes expressive of weariness, but a stranger might not observe it. I am very glad to possess a picture of so late a date. The crayon drawn eight years ago this summer we considered good, it betrays the poet. I always liked it. Mr. Channing, Emerson, Alcott, and many other friends who have looked at the ambrotype, express much satisfaction.

We are disappointed that we may not see you at present. I know that our home has lost all its attraction. You are aware what a host Henry was, how full of profit and entertainment was all his conversation. Still the town contains many valued friends of my dear brother whom I know that you would enjoy meeting, and I trust that it will not be long ere we see you in Concord.

Let me thank you for your late letters, so full of heartfelt sympathy, as well as appreciation and

admiration for my dear brother's rare traits. I shall ever prize them most highly.

Henry left a vast amount of manuscript. He made disposition of some of his effects, and he often spoke of yourself, Mr. Blake and Brown, but I regret that he did not decide what should be given to these friends. When you come to Concord I hope that you may find something to keep which belonged to Henry, if you desire it.

I regret that you did not see Henry during his late illness. It was not possible to be sad in his presence. I feel as if he had done much to strengthen the faith of all his friends.

No shadow of gloom attaches to anything in my mind, connected with my precious brother. Henry's whole life impresses me as a grand miracle. I always thought him the most upright man I ever knew, and now it is a pleasure to praise him.

With very kind regards to your family, believe me,

Yours truly,

S. E. Thoreau.

Concord, Aug. 31, 1862.

Mr. Ricketson :

Very dear Friend, — Nothing but illness, which has prostrated me all the summer, has prevented my acknowledging your kind letter of May 27th.

No opportunity has occurred to send to New Bedford, else I should have forwarded "Wilson's Ornithology." Henry mentioned the volume to me,

as one of value, and as being out of print. Believe me, I shall be most happy to transfer it to the shelves of your library. Henry always admired your relation to Nature, and he much enjoyed your letters last spring containing a record of the coming of the birds.

You refer to Henry's "dance" at your house some years since. I have so often witnessed the like that I can easily imagine how it was, and I remember that Henry gave me some account of the same. I recollect he said that he did not scruple to tread on Mr. Alcott's toes. I hope you will some day let me see the verses written on the occasion.

Your lines entitled "Walden" afforded mother and myself much satisfaction, they seem very just, and I am glad to know that in his lifetime, you appreciated so well my precious brother.

I have thought that you might like to see some verses which Henry wrote soon after my brother John's decease, and I will transcribe them. Henry scarcely spoke of dear John, it pained him too much. He sent the following verses from Castleton, Staten Island, in a letter to Helen in May, 1843. You will see that they apply to himself.

"Brother, where dost thou dwell?
What sun shines for thee now?
Dost thou indeed fare well?
As we wished here below?

"What season didst thou find?
'T was winter here.

Are not the fates more kind
Than they appear?

"Is thy brow clear again,
As in thy youthful years?
And was that ugly pain
The summit of thy fears?

"Yet thou wast cheery still;
They could not quench thy fire;
Thou didst abide their will,
And then retire.

"Where chiefly shall I look
To feel thy presence near?
Along the neighboring brook
May I thy voice still hear?

"Dost thou still haunt the brink
Of yonder river's tide?
And may I ever think
That thou art by my side?

"What bird wilt thou employ
To bring me word of thee?
For it would give them joy,
'T would give them liberty,
To serve their former lord
With wing and minstrelsy.

"A sadder strain has mixed with their song,
They 've slowlier built their nests;
Since thou art gone
Their lively labor rests.

"Where is the finch — the thrush,
I used to hear?

Ah! they could well abide
The dying year.

"Now they no more return,
I hear them not;
They have remained to mourn,
Or else forgot."

I suppose you have read Mr. Emerson's article. I should like to know what you think of it.

I hope the autumn will not pass without a visit from you. I long to see you and talk with you of dear Henry.

Mother joins with me in kind regards to yourself and family. Yours truly,

S. E. T.

The Shanty, 2d Sept., 1862.

Dear Miss Thoreau, — In my younger days I had a seal with a harp upon it, and this motto, "I answer to the touch;" and though I grow more sedate with increasing years, I am not sorry to find that your kind and friendly letter has touched a responsive chord. I am pained to hear that you have been so ill, the announcement of which by yourself is the first intimation I have had of it, for certainly had I known it, I should have hastened to write you or some one of your family about you. I trust that you are fast recovering, and that the cooler weather of autumn will prove favorable to you. I shall be very glad to have Henry's copy of Wilson's Ornithology, although I felt after I had written to

you for the same, that I had been too forward, and should have waited for you to have asked what book I would prefer. I am happy to learn that my last letters to Henry afforded him some gratification. I do not regret that I did not see Henry towards his close, as my remembrances of him are now as he usually appeared when on our rural rambles here and at Concord. I am glad that my lines entitled "Walden" pleased you and your mother. I am not much of a versifier, though by nature of the poetic temperament, but my lines can claim one recommendation, they are genuine.

I have never before seen the verses of your brother you sent me. How tender and beautiful they are, and to you and your mother they must be a precious memento of her dear, noble sons, who I trust have met and joined the dear sister and father in a higher and better sphere of existence. It will be one year ago the 5th of this month when I parted with Henry at the Concord depot. He had made me a visit in the latter part of the previous August as you may remember, but was too feeble at that time to ramble much; but we took a number of pleasant rural drives about the country and to the seashore.

The following are the verses you refer to.

THOREAU'S DANCE.

Like the Indian dance of old,
Far within the forest shade,
Showing forth the spirit bold,
That no foeman e'er dismayed; —

Like the dancing of the Hours,
Tripping on with merry feet,
Triumphing o'er earthly powers,
Yet with footsteps all must greet; —

Like the Fauns, and Satyrs, too,
Nimbly leaping in the grove,
Now unseen, and then in view,
As amid the trees they move; —

Like the leaves by whirlwind tossed
In some forest's valley wide,
Scattered by the Autumn frost,
Whirling madly, side by side; —

Thus, and still mysterious more,
Our philosopher did prance,
Skipping on our parlor floor,
In his wild *improvised* dance.

April, 1857.

You ask my opinion of Mr. Emerson's article on your brother. When I read it for the first time I felt somewhat disappointed in its want of fullness, but on subsequent reading I feel better satisfied, and bating a few errors in fact, I do not think it could be much improved. I think Mr. Emerson intended the strictest justice to Henry's memory, but I think also that to strangers the article would fail in some important particulars to convey an idea of his noblest and highest qualities. I do not myself think that Henry was fully revealed, and I had looked forward to the more genial years of advanced life, when the spiritual experiences of his soul should bring us nearer together. But a truer or

better man I never knew, and his like I cannot hope to meet again. I keep his memory sacred in my heart. I thank you for your kind wishes to see and talk with me about your brother. I should be glad to do so, and hope before autumn closes to come to Concord. With kind regards from my wife, son, and daughters to yourself and mother, and my own, I remain Very truly yours,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

CONCORD, Feb. 7th, 1863.

MR. RICKETSON:

DEAR FRIEND, — I hasten to acknowledge your tribute to my dear brother. Any word in memory of him awakens my gratitude.

Mother and myself live almost wholly in the past. Henry is ever in our thoughts. I feel continually sustained and cheered by the influence of his child-like faith.

You are evidently not aware that I have been recently called to pass through a most fiery trial. Seven weeks ago yesterday, my poor mother fell down our back stairway, a long, steep flight (perhaps you may remember them), shattering her right arm frightfully, and otherwise seriously injuring herself. For an hour or two she was deprived of her senses, and during her insanity it was heart-rending to me to hear her call almost incessantly for Henry, so sadly did I miss his strong arm and kind, brave heart in that dark hour. Ether was administered, her arm was set, and since then my dear

mother has lain in her bed, a most patient sufferer. I have been her constant and only nurse. It is wonderful how much discipline we need, although this late affliction is wholly mysterious; somehow I feel a little wiser, and trust that it has been good for me.

You speak of a biography of Henry. I think the world is so much better for his having lived in it, that I ardently wish that a faithful record of his life might be written for the profit of all men. I do not think, however, of one competent to write it. Mr. W., whom you suggest, had a very slight acquaintance with my brother. Mr. Blake and Brown would be truer to him than any who knew him. Mr. Alcott perhaps best understood his religious character, while Mr. Emerson possesses the rare wisdom, discrimination, and taste requisite for the purpose. Mr. Channing and yourself might aid in the work. Henry's character was so comprehensive that I think it would take many minds to portray it.

Mr. Emerson's article in the "Atlantic" I value *very* highly, but you know that he always eschewed pathos, and reading it for consolation as a stricken mourner, I felt somewhat disappointed. Henry never impressed me as the Stoic which Mr. E. represents him. I think Henry was a person of much more faith than Mr. Emerson. I remember with pleasure Henry's criticism upon some chapters in "The Conduct of Life" which I read to him last winter.

I shall always regret that you did not see Henry during his last illness. He often seemed radiant.

One day observing his wasted limbs he said, "Sophia, my knees look like balls on a string, — I go on as if I were to stay a thousand years. I do enjoy myself."

Mr. Blake and Brown spent a day with me not long since, and paid a visit to Walden.

I hope we shall see you soon. Henry's friends are most welcome.

Mother joins with me in very kind regards to yourself and household. We are glad to know that you sometimes speak of dear Henry.

Yours very truly,

S. E. Thoreau.

Concord, May 18th, 1863.

My dear Mr. Ricketson, — I cannot tell you how very welcome was your last kind note. The sympathy of friends is truly prized by us.

I always reproach myself for any sadness in view of dear Henry's departure, knowing that the possession of such a priceless treasure as he was to us, for so long a time, should ever fill our hearts with gratitude. But I have passed the round of one year with no earthly friend to lean upon — the spring finds us in feeble health — my dear mother's frame sadly shattered, with no prospect of ever recovering the use of her right hand, and often when overwhelmed with care, I so miss the counsel of my precious brother, who was never cast down and who in every emergency could make the light shine, that I confess, my heart at times is heavy.

It is pleasant, and indeed impossible for me not to associate all Nature with Henry; he did so love all God's works. — When you come to Concord, I shall show you some of his Journals, and you will see how much he enjoyed, what lessons he learned from day to day.

> "No flower or herb his vernal head shall rear
> But when thou comest nigh will know thy tread,
> And lift a little more his happy head;
> The birds will watch thee walking, and thy breast
> Confide in as a wider, warmer nest;
> Beneath thy step shall thrill the buried root;
> The rill will run to lave thy lovéd foot;
> The earliest flowers of Spring from other eye
> Will hide, and wishful wait thy passing by;
> And when thy footstep to the forest roams
> The pines among their tops will say, 'He comes,'
> And give new balsam to their healing breath."

I often think how much Henry is spared when I realize the terrible state of our country, — it would have darkened his sky; he was most sensitive.

Did you receive my note with the photograph? — The prayer I copied is one Henry selected for the Dial years ago. I do not know the author.

I enjoyed your lines, "The Fallow Fields" — they made for me a charming picture.

Ticknor & Fields are about to issue a volume of Henry's papers.

I think that I have not told you of Calvin H. Green, of Michigan, a most enthusiastic admirer of my brother, — a total stranger to us. Mr. G. has written me several times since Henry left us, and

once said that he had desired to bestow some token of friendship upon Henry during his life, but now that it was too late, he wished to give it to the companion who walked most frequently with him, asking his name. Since then he has sent a cane to Mr. Channing. The wood is highly polished, a silver band with a motto from the "Week" and the names Thoreau and Channing encircle the cane, and on the top is a silver plate with "Friendship" engraved upon it. I should have said that the wood is of a bright red color, and came from California. The stick was cut from the "Manzanita," a little shrub which grows on the tops of mountains and bears apples, with evergreen leaves. Was not this a rare instance of friendship? How dear Henry would have enjoyed receiving the gift! Perhaps he knows all about it now.

You do not write as if you planned coming to Concord this season, but really, I think if you knew how *much* pleasure it would give me to see you here, that you would come. May we not expect you?

Mother unites with me in very kind regards to yourself and family.

Yours very sincerely,

Sophia E. Thoreau.

Concord, Dec. 15th, '63.

Mr. Ricketson:

Dear Friend, — I cannot let another day pass without assuring you of my most grateful remembrance of all the members of your family, who so

kindly contributed to the pleasure of my stay at Brooklawn.

I was much benefited by my absence from Concord, and since my return have been able to walk five or six miles with ease, which is a great gain. I spend much time out of doors, visit Walden very often, and the other day I enticed my good aunt Jennie, who will be 79 years old Christmas day, to accompany me to the pond. It gave her much satisfaction to visit the spot where dear Henry enjoyed so much. I walked up to the north part of the town lately, where his little house now stands, and ate my dinner under its roof, with the mice for company.

I hope you like the new volume "Excursions." I am quite reconciled to the title.

I found Mr. Blake in Concord when I got home. He shrinks from undertaking such a book as Mr. Fields desires to make of the letters — thinks he lacks literary skill. I trust, however, that he will simply edit the letters if nothing more.

Mr. Curtis lectured before the Lyceum a few weeks since, and we are to have Mr. Emerson tomorrow evening.

Mr. Channing is quite neighborly, although he did not condescend to make any inquiries as to his New Bedford friends when he first met me after my return, yet I am quite sure that he was interested to hear all that I had to tell him about them.

Mrs. Brooks is sadly afflicted by the death of her husband — indeed all Concord sympathize in the

loss, for Mr. Brooks had won the respect and affection of all who knew him.

For many weeks I have had a lame wrist, which has compelled me to neglect all my correspondents; nothing taxes it so severely as writing. This must be my apology for any seeming neglect.

I trust that you have had a visit from your son Arthur. Please remember me affectionately to your gentle wife, and daughters.

Thinking of Miss Anna one day at our cliffs, I plucked a frost-bitten leaf, which I will inclose.

Hoping to hear a pleasant report from your household, I remain,

Very truly yours,

S. E. Thoreau.

My kind regards to Walton. I would like to see him in Concord.

Concord, Nov. 29, 1864.

Mr. Ricketson:

Dear Friend, — A few weeks since I felt moved to respond to your kindly notice of Mr. Phillips. It betrayed so much wisdom, and dignity, — I fancied it coming fresh and pure from your little Shanty, — a spot unspotted from this world, and I assure you it was most satisfactory, — it was refreshing to feel that another man as good as Mr. Phillips was ready to stand by his side.

. . . . . .

I am still grateful for your last pleasant note, which I have so long neglected to acknowledge. I

did hope that the summer would not pass without seeing you, with your daughters, in Concord. The invalid state of my family forbids my inviting guests, but I do like to have them take the responsibility of coming and sharing what hospitality it is in our power to bestow.

I thought ere this to send you a volume of my brother's letters. Mr. Blake shrank from the task of editing them, feeling that he lacked the requisite literary skill, so Mr. Emerson assumed the labor and I suppose that they will not appear at present.

The "Cape Cod" papers have been printed. I believe that the publisher wishes to issue the letters first, so the volume is delayed.

Mr. Blake and Brown visited us this autumn, and Mr. Channing treated them very courteously — on Henry's account, I have no doubt.

Since I last wrote you I have parted with one more out of my narrow circle of relatives. My dear Aunt Jane died in Bangor in August last, while visiting her nieces — she had paralysis of the lungs. Aunt Maria, the only surviving member of the family, makes her home with us for the present.

I trust you are enjoying these Indian summer days.

Mother joins with me in very kind regards to all your family.

With sincere respect, believe me,

Yours truly,

S. E. Thoreau.

CONCORD, March, 1865.

DEAR MR. RICKETSON, — I felt that I got much more than my deserts when your welcome letters reached me in response to my note.

You can scarcely realize how much pleasure your communications afford me, since I am so tardy in acknowledging them. But the kind words you so sincerely write of my dear brother are very comforting to me.

I cannot tell you how startled and grieved we all felt to hear of Mr. Cholmondeley's death. His brother's letter impressed me as a painful chapter from some romance. It is hard to realize that he has left us. We have always felt the truest regard for Mr. C. as a person of rare integrity, great benevolence, and the sincerest friendliness, and I am sure that his loss must be *very* great to those who knew, and loved him best.

I have lately read his letters to Henry, with peculiar interest. He really cared much for America, and I think seriously entertained the idea at one time, of making it his home.

I am surprised by referring to your letters to find that they were written December 2d — so quickly has the spring come. It was Henry's favorite season. Did you see some lines, by Channing, entitled "A Voice of Spring"? I fancy that dear Henry's absence inspired the lament. Some of Mr. C.'s verses are very charming to me, he makes such lovely pictures of birds and flowers. I will copy a part of the poem.

"The swallow is flying over
But he will *not* come to me;
He who heard his cry of spring
Hears that no more, heeds not his wing.

"How bright the skies that dally
Along day's cheerful arch,
And paint the sunset valley!
How redly buds the larch!

"Blackbirds are singing,
Clear hylas ringing,
Over the meadow the frogs proclaim
The coming of spring to boy and dame,
But not to me,
Nor thee.

"A wail in the wind is all I hear;
A voice of woe for a lover's loss,
A motto for a traveling cross —
And yet it is mean to mourn for thee,
In the form of bird or blossom or bee."

Some time I will copy all the lines if you care for them.

Mr. Hosmer was here not long since, and enjoyed hearing your letter. He said, "Tell Mr. Ricketson that I hope he will come to Concord, I should be glad to see him. How would he feel if he were sixty-seven years old, as I am?"

A few years since Mr. Emerson repeated "The Touchstone," in one of his lectures, and the newspapers printed it. I was delighted with it and saved it, and will enclose it for you.

How do you feel about Mr. Garrison's position to-day? I am sorry that he cannot see danger in the future, but I must adhere to the *cause* if I forsake the *man*. I will not inflict upon you any account of my many cares, which must serve as an apology for this meagre note, but pray that you will not think me selfish if I hope to hear from you again soon.

Mother joins with me in very kind regards to yourself and family.

Yours truly,

S. E. Thoreau.

Brooklawn, 15 March, 1865.

My Dear Friend, — Your kind and thoughtful present of Henry's Cape Cod book, came duly to hand, for which please accept my best thanks. But may I not soon expect to have a few lines, at least, from you to blend with the kindly spring influences? Already has spring set in with us. I had hardly sent my last letter to you before the bluebird arrived and saluted the Shanty and its inmate with his rich warble, and now we are rejoicing in song with the red-winged blackbird, song-sparrow and the coarser notes of pigeon woodpecker, crow, and blue jay. All winter we have the sweet meadow lark, and he, too, joins the vernal choir, as a kind of master of ceremonies. Several flocks of wild geese have also flown over, and the woodcock has already commenced his twilight gyrations and jubilant utterances, a kind of chuckling warble. So, my

dear friend, we are still blessed, and as happy as thoughtful patient creatures may be. Calm and grateful, are we all, I trust, for Heavenly favors.

I write in haste and intend this only as an acknowledgment of thanks for your valued present. Hoping to hear from you soon, or what would be better still to have a visit from you, with love to your mother and other friends, I remain,

Faithfully yours,

Dan'l Ricketson.

Memo. J. F. C. in his article on Mr. Emerson was very unjust to Henry, and went quite out of his way to wound him. But it can do him no harm. In charity to Mr. C. who would not, I think, do any one wrong, it must have been very carelessly done. In common respect for the departed and remaining friends, I do not see how he could have done it. Henry has a good and lasting fame. As Virgil says, "Sic itur ad astra."

Concord, July 17th, 1865.

Mr. Ricketson:

Dear Friend, — I trust that you have received a few lines from Miss Hosmer, who was kind enough to befriend me by replying to your last note. I was sorry to delay acknowledging it so long.

Mr. Emerson was very kind in assuming the task of editing the letters, and I do not like to express any dissatisfaction in relation thereto, but I despair of justice being done to Henry's character by any one. I do not mean that I despair in the future, for I am wholly content in the faith that God will

use the work of his own hands in blessing the example of my precious brother to those who knew him and to many who may come after him.

Oh! that there were more lives as transparent, as unclouded by sin, as dear Henry's!

During Mr. E.'s absence last winter some of the proofs of the letters were sent to me. I was disappointed to find that some passages betraying natural affection had been omitted. I consulted Mrs. Emerson, who said that her husband was a Greek, and that he treated his own writings in the same manner. I expressed my desire that the passages should not be left out — it did not seem quite honest to Henry not to print them. I presume that the sentences to which I refer seemed to Mr. Emerson trivial. Mr. Fields thought it best to use them, and they were retained. Mr. Alcott thought it a happy accident which brought the matter to my notice.

At the close of a beautiful letter to Mrs. Emerson, Henry wrote, "Shake a day-day to Edith, and say 'good-night' to Ellen for me." This ending was omitted, so the world might never have known that he loved the babies.

I did not see any of the proofs after Mr. Emerson's return. He told me that he had *bragged* that the coming volume would be a most perfect piece of stoicism, and he feared that I had marred his classic statue.

Mr. Fields called to see me lately; he is very anxious to obtain the letters which Henry wrote to Mr. Cholmondeley, and will you do me the favor to

send to Europe for them, if it will not give you too much trouble. I do not know the address of Mr. C.'s widow or his brother? Please assure them of the sympathy which mother and myself feel in view of their great loss? Mr. C. gained our highest esteem and affection during his stay in our family. I shall be happy to defray expense attending the receipt of the letters.

We were much touched the other day to learn that a party of forty ladies and gentlemen, all strangers, came to Walden to celebrate Henry's birthday. A party of young ladies who went to the pond to bathe accidentally discovered the company. They had spread a table on the spot where his little hut formerly stood.

I should like to know how you feel about the perilous times in which we live.

Miss Louisa Alcott sails for Germany this week.

Please remember me very kindly to your family.

Yours truly,

S. E. Thoreau.

The Shanty, Brooklawn,
4 June, 1866.

Dear Miss Thoreau, — Your late, though very welcome letter of the 26th ult., with the book also, came in due time. The latter proves to be "Sewell's History," instead of the Journal of George Fox as I supposed, but it contains a large portion of the life and experiences of this, as I believe, godly as well as remarkable man, and is altogether a very valuable

and interesting work. I am quite inclined to agree with Charles Lamb that it is "worth all Ecclesiastical History put together." The interesting letters, too, of Mr. Cholmondeley, and the photographic likeness of his brother, and that of his house, Condover Hall, which I received with the book, I will retain, with your permission, for the present, and return them by my son Walton, who expects to go to Concord to visit Mr. Bull's vineyard in September, unless you desire them before that time. Besides, I expect to write Mr. C. soon, and should like to have them in the way of inspiration. I shall value the book very highly, not only for its intrinsic merits, but for its associations with your family, and particularly that it was Henry's. . . . I suppose you already know that I hold to the religious principles of my ancestors, who were Friends, although I am not sectarian, and by no means exclusive, and I hope to

> "Become more sage,
> Milder, and mellower with declining age."

I am sorry that ill health should have been the cause of your long silence, which I hope will soon be overcome by the more genial season we are now enjoying.

I should like to come to Concord once more, but since the death of Henry I have hardly felt equal to the undertaking. I should so much miss him, I could hardly have supposed any place possessed so much human interest as that of Concord in my mind from its alliance with your brother. He was indeed

her presiding genius and interpreter; and now that he is gone, the river, the woods, the landscape, and even Walden Pond, with all its beauty, have lost for me their greatest charm. I could not have joined the party of forty strangers who lately had a picnic on the spot of Henry's hermitage. I may at some not far distant time retrace our walks, or sail upon the river, alone or with some congenial friend, possibly, but hardly. May we not hope ere long to see you here again? Your visit is remembered by us all with much pleasure. With the united love of my wife, son, and daughters to yourself and mother, I remain,

Truly and affect'ly yours,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

THE SHANTY, BROOKLAWN,
4th Aug. 1866.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have been thinking for a long time of writing you, for few days pass but I think of Henry, and of course, as you are next to him, I naturally look to you. If he were now alive, I think I could enjoy and appreciate his company better than ever before. I have passed through with an experience since his death which, however severe at first and uncompromising in its exactions, has, I thank God, left me with larger faith in and charity towards my fellow men. It is not often that a man at fifty changes for the better, but I hope that such is my case, at least in that world-wide sympathy for the conditions of mankind. I have been so disap-

pointed in the religion of the churches that I am convinced more than ever that that which saves the soul is the spirit which purifies and prepares it for the good of humanity. This is, however, only a revival of a former experience which I had in early life, and which was at that time intensified by the pro-slavery of the so-called church. While I am led, therefore, to believe in the marvellous records of the Christian religion, and feel the importance of giving heed to my ways herein, I see more of the heavenly spirit it inculcates in pagan humanity than in the hardness and selfishness of most of those it has been my lot to know prominently connected with church and sect. It now appears to me that what I saw in Henry, so good and pure, was the effect of the true baptism, and I can understand how one so heavenly minded could meet death with Christian composure. How his noble soul must have expanded when it launched into the broader atmosphere of light and knowledge! But something checks me — have I sufficient faith in life and immortality thus to write? I hope tremblingly, prayerfully, and may God pardon all my faint-heartedness. I write to you as to a sister in the Lord, for in you I think I see the spirit of the same good angel as in Henry.

With these confessions you can see how much nearer I am drawn again to our friends Emerson, Alcott, *et id omne genus*.

I have not written Mr. Cholmondeley, or rather I have not sent him a letter, for I wrote one to him some time ago, which still remains unsent. I hope

ere long to find myself led that way, as I do not wish to write without having something to say to him. As it is possible I may reach Concord by and by, I will keep the photographs a little longer. Should I not come I will send them. But may we not hope to see you the coming autumn? I will promise to try to be good, and not combat with you on religion, at least.

My son, the doctor, speaks of having had a pleasant interview with you and your mother on his late visit to Concord. My boys, as well as myself and the rest of the family, all hold Henry in dear remembrance. Alas! how much we miss his visits here! It was Henry, I find, more than all else, that made Concord attractive to me. I still can see much to admire in her slowly flowing river, its banks, the old fields and woods, out-of-the-way places, and Walden Pond, sacred to H.'s memory. But the master who held the talismanic wand has gone, or only stands fading in the past, half real, half spiritual, still haunting these endeared abodes of poetry and peace. It is a great blessing to have a house to love — to have eyes to see and ears to hear what nature and nature's God has to reveal to you from your own doorway.

Pardon this egotistic scrawl, and with the united love of my household to yourself and mother, believe me as ever,

Your faithful friend,

Daniel Ricketson.

Concord, Aug. 25, 1867.

Dear Mr. Ricketson, — There are seasons in my experience so filled with memories of the past that one drop of true sympathy quite melts me. At such a moment your letter reached me, and I thank you for your most friendly allusion to my dear brother.

I did receive a response to my invitation to your son and daughters, and to make amends for my disappointment, I sent for other friends, who came at once, and thus engrossed me, which must be my apology for not writing to New Bedford. I hope that nothing will occur in either family to prevent our seeing Walton and his sisters at the proposed time, when, too, I trust the weather will be more propitious for out-door enjoyment than of late.

I passed a day at Walden with my friends. We were disappointed to meet several hundreds collected from the neighboring towns. Since arrangements for picnic parties have been made, the pond seldom enjoys a quiet day during the summer months. Associations have rendered the spot so entirely sacred to me, that the music and dancing, swinging and tilting, seemed like profanity almost. An overwhelming sense of my great loss saddened me, and I felt that only the waters sympathized in my bereavement, for there seemed in all that throng no heart nor eye to appreciate the purity and beauty of Nature. The lover of Walden has, indeed, departed: I recalled my last day spent there with Henry: —

"Sweet September day, so calm, so cool, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky."

While I sat sketching, Henry gathered grapes from a vine, dropping its fruit into the green waters which gently laved its roots.

With the lapse of time my sense of loneliness increases, and I often fail to realize that each day shortens my separation from those who have gone before.

I will return your letters by Walton, when he comes again. Mr. Sanborn has received a letter from Mr. Cholmondeley since I have; it is a long time ago, however. Hope he is still alive, and that we may have good news of him ere long.

I was caught in a heavy shower the other day, and chanced to meet Farmer Hosmer in a store. He has worked hard on the land this summer, and consequently is in good health and spirits.

Mr. and Mrs. Alcott are better than I feared they would ever be, after their serious illness last winter.

Mother and myself send kind regards to yourself and family.

We anticipate with much pleasure the visit from the young people.

Yours very truly,

S. E. Thoreau.

Concord, Nov. 12th, 1867.

Dear Mr. Ricketson, — Your letter of last week was cordially received, and I was much interested in the pleasant picture, which grew out of your finding

the old jack-knife. I wish you might find dear Henry's old knife, we never saw it after his departure, although, I think, he used it during his illness. Mr. Channing wished that it might be bestowed upon him, and we should gladly have consented, had it not mysteriously disappeared.

Thank you for your notice of Mr. Alger's new book. I have not seen the volume; but I did see a paper in a religious magazine, written by Mr. A. some time last winter, which proved his entire misapprehension of my brother's character; the writer seemed inspired by personal enmity. Mr. Channing was greatly disturbed by it. Mr. Emerson and Fields both censured the author so severely, that I really felt inclined to pity, more than blame, the poor man. I confess myself greatly surprised by Prof. Lowell's article, published in the "North American Review" a year since. I have too much respect for Mr. Lowell's powers of discrimination to account at all for his blundering and most unfriendly attack upon Henry's book. It is full of contradictions. I presume you have read it.

As you remark, "Henry has already received the homage of the best of our land," and surely I cannot allow myself to grieve over the unkindness, or ignorance, which may prompt any one to malign him. I would rather listen to the bay-wing. Let me tell you what Henry says about him: —

"While dropping beans in the garden, just after sundown, May 13th, I hear across the fields the note of the bay-wing (which I have no doubt sits on

some fence-post or rail there) and it instantly translates me from the sphere of my work. It reminds me of so many country afternoons and evenings when this bird's strain was heard far over the fields. The spirit of its earth-song, of its serene and true philosophy, was breathed into me, and I saw the world as through a glass — as it lies eternally. Some of its aboriginal contentment — even of its domestic felicity — possessed me. What he suggests is permanently true. As the bay-wing sang many a thousand years ago, so sings he to-night. In the beginning God heard his song and pronounced it good, and hence it has endured. It reminds me of many a summer sunset, of the farmhouse far in the fields, — its milk-pans and well-sweep and the cows coming home from pasture. He is a brother poet, this small gray bird (a bard) whose muse inspires mine. His lay is an idyl or pastoral older and sweeter than any that is classic.

"If you would have the song of the sparrow inspire you a thousand years hence, let your life be in harmony with its strain to-day.". . .

We were much disappointed that Anna could not visit us this autumn. We do not despair of seeing Walton ere the winter sets in, and hope that you will favor us with your presence when next you visit your son, the Doctor.

With very kind regards from mother and myself to you and your family, I remain,

Yours truly,

S. E. Thoreau.

CONCORD, Mar. 30th, 1869.

DEAR MR. RICKETSON, — As you once wrote me, "I answer to the touch." I had seated myself this rainy morning to invite you to mingle your note with that of the spring bird, when a neighbor, returning from the office, brought me your letter, — a cheering strain from New Bedford, — breaking the long silence, for which I thank you.

I am happy to hear that you have been so pleasantly occupied the past winter, & shall most cordially welcome the promised volume.

The spring has come. It was the season dear Henry loved best. He detected its first symptom, — the softened air, even when snow and ice covered the ground, & he would go out in cold rain storms, feeling with wet and freezing fingers amid the withered grass & snow, for the radical leaves & prostrate stems of the fair flowers, so sure to bloom again. The bluebird he called "the angel of the spring! Fair & innocent, yet the offspring of the earth. The color of the sky *above* & of the subsoil *beneath*, suggesting what sweet & innocent melody (terrestrial melody) may have its birthplace between the sky and the ground."

> "The flowers that earliest usher in the spring
> Long for the eye that kindred love did bring
> To view their daily growth, and wait in vain
> To hear thy childlike welcome ring again.
>
> "To lure thee to thy long frequented haunts,
> At early dawn the cheery robin chants;
> Her notes, unheeded, rise on wings of love,
> As if to greet thee in the blue above."

The preceding lines are part of a poem entitled Thoreau, which was sent to Mr. Emerson signed I. A. E. He does not recognize the author.

You enquire for y'r old friends. Farmer Hosmer has blessed us with frequent calls & visits during the winter. He dropped in last Sat. just as we were going to tea. He drew up to the table, beginning at once to discourse upon a future life, letting fall many wise sayings — nibbling away, meanwhile, upon brown bread & cheese, which composed his meal. He talks about the weight of 71 winters. But I think he seems less burdened than formerly — appears to care less for this world's goods & so can afford to be cheerful. One evening I read Snow Bound to him & he enjoyed it so well that he took the book home for Mrs. Hosmer to see. Your poem, The Old Barn, afforded him satisfaction. He thought it the best you had ever written.

I have not seen the Alcotts since their return, if indeed they have got home again.

Mrs. Emerson has been an invalid most of the winter. She is better now. Mr. E. has been absent as usual from Concord during the lecturing season. Edward, perhaps you know, is studying medicine.

Mr. W. E. C. last & least, I can tell you nothing about, not having met him since Anna and Walton were with us last autumn.

I have not the pleasure of knowing Mr. Hotham.

I had a friendly letter from Mr. Conway recently. He writes me that he has determined to sever the

last strand that bound him to ecclesiasticism and thus enjoy a little personal freedom before he dies.

I shall not forget your cordial invitations to New Bedford.

I hope Anna and Walton will visit us this summer, when we can give them a *warm* reception. They are kindly remembered by Mr. Wheildon's family, who hope to see them again.

With kind regards from mother and myself,

Believe me,

Yours truly,

S. E. T.

Brooklawn, March 14th, 1872.

My dear Friend, — I have just received a few lines from the Doct'r announcing the decease of your dear mother. I regret that I am not near you to render such little services and express such poor words of sympathy as your great affliction would call forth. As it is, I can only send in this way my friendly feelings for the occasion. Your mother was a woman of unusual vivacity, as well as of rare intellectual powers; and in her youth, I doubt not, was not only handsome, but the life of her companions. I did not know her until she had passed her prime and had met with severe afflictions. I could recognize in her dramatic talent the origin of your brother Henry's fine gift for conversation, and in the quiet manner of your dear father his repose of mind; combined, the strong contrasts of your par-

ents produced Henry's character, one of the truest and noblest of our time. I was thinking of him yesterday, and thought that nearly ten years had already elapsed since he left us.

From a letter of Arthur's to his mother, received yesterday, I was prepared to hear of your mother's demise, although he spoke of her strong vitality, and thus admitting a possibility of her rallying. She lived to a good old age, and has gone in good time to join as we trust the departed ones of your family.

As the funeral will be to-morrow, I shall not be able to attend it. Still you may regard me as with you in spirit, and sympathizing with you as a friend upon the sad occasion. I trust that the Doct. will be able to render you such fraternal as well as professional assistance as may be in his power.

My family join with me in the expression of sympathy, and I remain, my dear friend,

Yours faithfully,

Dan'l Ricketson.

P. S. I am thinking of visiting Concord when the spring is a little further advanced.

Bangor, May 18th, 1876.

Dear Mr. Ricketson, — It seems almost like distrusting your friendship to keep silent any longer, so now I write to tell you that I am ill. Very often I have thought how pleasant it would be to receive your kind and sympathetic letters as of old, but I have not asked you to write, for I felt that I should be a most unworthy correspondent, and then I have

refrained from arousing the anxiety of my friends. I cannot bear that they should be burdened on my account.

My health has been steadily failing ever since I left Concord. I am suffering with Ascites, — have been subjected to paracentesis seventeen times, so you can judge of the progress of the disease — it is a lingering one. My vitality surprises all my physicians. How long I may continue of course I cannot know. For the past five weeks I have been confined mostly to my bed, subjected to very great suffering. It is truly wonderful how evanescent are these bodily pains.

You will be glad to know that notwithstanding my invalid condition I have been able to get much satisfaction out of life. Memories of the past afford me true consolation. I feel as if I had been singled out for peculiar blessings. No sad hours as yet have befallen me — they may come. Thus far through Divine blessing my soul is permitted to dwell in an atmosphere of cheerfulness, and I am now conscious of the Infinite tenderness which overshadows all God's children.

I feel very much interested to hear of the welfare of your family, and I hope you will write me. Is the Doctor still in New Bedford? Some very sacred memories I associate with him, and shall be ever grateful for his most kind attentions.

Unless some favorable symptoms occur, I feel that my day for letter-writing is past.

I write out of great weakness this morning, be-

lieving that you will pardon all discrepancies, and accept these lines from one who has ever valued your friendship and has still faith in its endurance.

With very kind love to all, let me say farewell.

S. E. Thoreau.

Concord, Monday, Oct. 9, 1876.

Dear Sir, — Our dear friend Sophia E. Thoreau, passed away at Bangor Saturday morning. (7th.)

Becoming necessary to have the remains interred with the least possible delay, I left Bangor Saturday evening, and they were deposited in her grave at "Sleepy Hollow," at half past three yesterday in the presence of such friends as could be notified. Rev. Mr. Reynolds performed the service at the grave and everything passed off most appropriately.

She suffered greatly during the last weeks of her illness, but she had great fortitude and patience and died in full faith of a blessed immortality.

Her mortal remains rest by the side of her dear brother Henry. The soul has gone to Him who gave it, and who endowed it with such superior capacities.

I should have written you from Bangor, but my time was occupied to the last moment in making the necessary arrangements for the removal of her remains. We have lost a dear friend, but she has found a sweet rest in heaven, I doubt not.

We cannot regret her escape from mortal agony, and bless God for what we have known and enjoyed of her on earth.

Mr. and Mrs. Le Brun have been exceedingly kind and attentive in this time of trouble.

With kind regards,

I am very truly yours, etc.,

GEO. H. THATCHER.

V

LETTERS OF A. BRONSON ALCOTT, ABBY M. ALCOTT, DANIEL RICKETSON, AND FRANK B. SANBORN

BROOKLAWN HOUSE AND SHANTY

LETTERS OF A. BRONSON ALCOTT, ABBY M. ALCOTT, DANIEL RICKETSON, AND FRANK B. SANBORN

CONCORD, MASS., Nov. 15, 1898.

DEAR FRIENDS, WALTON AND ANNA RICKETSON, — I ought long since to have acknowledged your kindness in sending me not only the photograph of the bust of Thoreau, which is so pleasing, but also the excellent photograph of your father. But I wished to copy out for you a passage in Mr. Alcott's Diary of 1857, which you may not have seen, and which shows his appreciation of Mr. Ricketson and of Brooklawn, — here it is.

BROOKLAWN, Wednesday, 1st April, 1857.

At Mr. Ricketson's, two and one-half miles from New Bedford, — a neat country residence, surrounded by wild pastures and low woods, the little stream Acushnet flowing east of the house and into Fairhaven bay at the city. The hamlet of Acushnet at the "Head of the River" (so called popularly) lies within half a mile of Ricketson's house. His tastes are pastoral, simple even to wildness; and he passes a good part of his day in the fields and woods, — or in his rude "Shanty" near his house, where he writes and reads his favorite authors, Cowper

having the first place in his affections. He is in easy circumstances, and has the manners of an English gentleman, — frank, hospitable, and with positive persuasions of his own. A man to feel on good terms with, and reliable as to the things good and true; mercurial, perhaps, and wayward a little sometimes, but full of kindness and sensibility to suffering: something of a poet, too, — singing the common things around him with a genuine love and tenderness, reminding one of Cowper, and, in the best lines, of Wordsworth. He has just written some papers, and printed them in the New Bedford "Mercury" (a newspaper) on the antiquities of that place, of which he intends to make a book soon, illustrated with maps and portraits, the genealogies of the primitive families, and the local history of the District. His ancestors were among the original settlers, and were gentlemen of good estates. They were Quakers, and the traits of that sect survive in him, as, indeed, in the best families here. He tells me most of them, by intermarriage, if not direct descent, spring from this formidable persuasion (the Quakers).

R. has an agreeable family, consisting of his wife and two daughters, also two sons, the oldest a seaman, the youngest a promising student, the whole family most friendly and hospitable. We talk on men, times, and things: on Emerson particularly, as a representative of the American Ideas, and Thoreau as scarcely less so, and walk to the "Head of the River," returning to dinner. In the afternoon we

ride into town (New Bedford) and see Weiss about talking some evening while I stay. He approves the design, and will move at once in the matter.

Thursday, April 2d. Henry Thoreau comes to tea; also Ellery Channing, who is engaged on the New Bedford Mercury, and we talk till into the evening, late.

Friday, 3d, A. M. In house and Shanty. Thoreau and Ricketson treating of Nature and the Wild. Thoreau has visited R. before, and won him as a disciple, though not in the absolute way he has Blake of Worcester, whose love for T.'s genius partakes of the exceeding tenderness of woman, and is a pure Platonism, to the fineness and delicacy of the devotee's sensibilities. But R. is himself, and plays the manly part in the matter, defending himself against the master's twistiness and tough "thoroughcraft," with spirit and ability.

P. M. Walk into the city and see Weiss, who has seen his friends, and commends me to the Arnolds, where he hopes to hold our conversations. Channing returns with me to Brooklawn, to smoke his pipe and joke with R. in the Shanty.

Is not this a good brief account of that distant time when Channing was living in New Bedford, after the death of his wife, I in his house at Concord, with my sister Sarah, and Thoreau still making his tours and lectures and visits? I had the passage copied out from Mr. Alcott's Diary during his lifetime, while I was writing the life of Thoreau in 1881.

Walton's bust of Thoreau is in place at the Library, and makes a good effect. Mr. Channing, who was very ill a month ago, is now well again, and very Homer-like in his long white beard.

Yours ever, F. B. Sanborn.

Concord, January 10, 1862.

Dear Friend, — You have not been informed of Henry's condition this winter, and will be sorry to hear that he grows feebler day by day, and is evidently failing and fading from our sight. He gets some sleep, has a pretty good appetite, reads at intervals, takes notes of his readings, and likes to see his friends, conversing, however, with difficulty, as his voice partakes of his general debility. We had thought this oldest inhabitant of our Planet would have chosen to stay and see it fairly dismissed into the Chaos (out of which he has brought such precious jewels, — gifts to friends, to mankind generally, diadems for fame to coming followers, forgetful of his own claims to the honors) before he chose simply to withdraw from the spaces and times he has adorned with the truth of his genius. But the masterly work is nearly done for us here. And our woods and fields are sorrowing, though not in sombre, but in robes of white, so becoming to the piety and probity they have known so long, and soon are to miss. There has been none such since Pliny, and it will be long before there comes his like; the most sagacious and wonderful Worthy of his time, and a marvel to coming ones.

I write at the suggestion of his sister, who thought his friends would like to be informed of his condition to the latest date.

Ever yours and respectfully,

A. Bronson Alcott.

Brooklawn, Feb. 14th, 1862.

Dear Friend Alcott, — Many thanks for your kind letter informing me of the lamentable state of our dear Thoreau. I wrote his sister some two months since for information relative to his health, and her reply, perhaps, prepared me the more calmly to receive your more particular account of his present state. I had still hopes of his eventual recovery, and cannot yet feel that we must lose him. How poorly can we spare him! indeed, he has no peer. He has done more than any other to make old Concord classic ground. How nobly, how truly, how priestly has he lived — the most Godlike of men.

I feel much indebted to him; how much, indeed, have we all enjoyed his companionship in wood and field and on his favorite stream! Concord will be in time to come a resort for the young and ardent pilgrim, whether poet, philosopher, or naturalist. Poor Channing will be more than ever stripped by his loss. Mr. Emerson, as well as yourself, Hawthorne, and Farmer Hosmer, — in fact, all Concord will meet with an irreparable loss in the event of his death. But cannot we hope yet? I have felt that he might recover. I will not yet relinquish my heart's desire.

I often think of you and Mrs. Alcott and your brave, good girls, daughters worthy of so noble a parentage. How I wish I could see you oftener, or in some way serve you! I know of no pleasanter room than your own library with its arched fireplace, the owner there of course. I still hold to my open wood fire, and have already laid in my next winter's wood, fourteen and a half cords, a little more than usual, but about two and a half cords are hard and soft pine. I think you would enjoy the lighter labor with me of packing upon a sled drawn by an honest yoke of oxen. Oxen are truly classic beasts, and well become the woods as well as the rural landscape. But can't you come and see me, and sit by our fireside once more? I am growing, I trust, calmer and milder, and I hope to

> "become more sage,
> Milder and mellower with declining age."

Although I have never been able to possess a spirit in peace, I have always been an admirer of those who do; and among those the most successful in this sphere of grace I know of none more truly so than you and our dear suffering friend T. How beautiful is serenity! I love it in nature as well as in human character. Mountains and cataracts, heaving waves, thunder and lightning, and generally what men call sublime, even the most impassioned eloquence, attract me not. How serene and lovely was Jesus of Nazareth — how much he excels all in the beautiful and simple grandeur of his life and death! I trust dear Thoreau will find a consolation,

if needed, in his gracious words and still more gracious suffering and fortitude. Truly we cannot make too much of Him. One with the Father, was he not?

I am happy to inform you of the improved state of my wife's health; my daughters, too, are well, and my youngest son, Walton, who is our *main stay*. Our eldest, Arthur, the doctor, is surgeon in the Navy, and is on board the U. S. Ship Nightingale, cruising in the Gulf of Mexico on his second voyage. A letter from him we received to-day in company with yours. He appears to be well satisfied with his situation, but I should much prefer for him to be at home, or at least on *terra firma* in a more peaceful walk of life.

Your letter bears date January 10th, but as it is postmarked February 11th, I consider you wrote on the 10th inst.

I should be glad once more to see our dear Henry Thoreau, and should he hold on till milder weather I hope to take him again by the hand. Do remember me most kindly and affectionately to him. I wrote Channing of late, but hardly expect an answer. Please mention me in friendship to him.

I must close, as I am just going to show a piece of forest pines to a young artist, a poor (rich) young genius, our frequent guest — Robert Swain Gifford by name, a native of Naushon, one of the Elizabeth Islands that form the south side of our (Buzzard's) Bay, destined to be known hereafter, I ween.

My wife, daughters, and son, individually, desire

warm remembrances to you and yours. Mrs. R. and our girls would like to be kindly remembered to Mr. Thoreau.

Remember me affectionately to dear Mrs. Alcott, and believe me, as ever,

Your faithful and affectionate friend,

D. Ricketson.

The Shanty, Brooklawn,
4th Feb., 1865.

Dear and Respected Friend, — Seeing your name in the last number of the "Liberator" as one of the voices at the late anti-slavery meeting in Boston, and agreeing with you in regard to him who may be regarded as the present leader of the anti-slavery reform, to wit, — Wendell Phillips, I have felt prompted once more to address you a few lines in the spirit of kindness and brotherly love.

It is a long time since we have seen each other or passed a line. I feel that I have so much in common with you and my other Concord friends that I often regret our separation. Every year I become less and less of a traveller; and that which once appeared a pleasure or a trifle in the undertaking is now quite an arduous affair. Still, I hope to see old Concord and my friends there, perhaps before the year closes, D. V.

I wrote your good wife a letter some months since which I presume she received. I did not expect an answer, but hope my remembrance of her in this humble way was not altogether unwelcome. My

daughters have been reading "Moods," and to my queries relative to it, for I never read any works of fiction in these days, speak favorably, if not enthusiastically of its merits. This may sound to the fair author as "faint praise," but it is not so intended. My youngest narrated the plot, and the eldest said she thought the book would do good in giving a more elevated idea of marriage among young people than usually obtains. I am glad thus to learn that your daughter is herein a public educator for good. Vegetable diet does not appear to have quenched the tender passion in her heart, and I trust she is not proof against the shafts of the shrewd little god.

My life goes on much after the old sort — my family cares, reading, writing, and meditation occupy my time, with occasional rambles in the woods and about the country. I am now in my fifty-second year, and nearly eight years older than when you visited us in the spring of 1857. I have passed through many experiences and some changes, and I trust have made some progress, so that I now might more truly affiliate with one of your calm and philosophic character.

What a chasm has the death of Thoreau made in Concord! He did not seem to me to be a man to die, but to live on and on, and outlive his generation until he became so much affiliated to his own beloved rural haunts as to merge into some old mossy rock, wild flower, or favorite song-bird. But how handsomely he departed, leaving a lesson of sweet

serenity and peace to the most Christian philosopher. O I trust he still lives in the land of the blest and is now enjoying his ardent pursuit in whatever is curious, beautiful, or good. I cannot conceive of him as an angel or an evangelist (he is probably both), but as some good old hermit or monk, who still drinks from some sweet fount of nature, and goes at night into his mossy cave or leaf-grown bower. Am I irreverent? If so, may Heaven pardon me, for the Pearly Gates must have indeed stood wide open for one so good, so wise, and so pure to enter.

Will you do me the favor the next time in your way to ask my good friend, Miss Sophia Thoreau, if she received two letters from me in November last part, in reply to one I had just before received from her. I fear she, or her mother, may be ill, and should be glad to hear from her if not so.

Say to Louisa that her literary fame has reached to this far out of the way corner, and that she is very popular with her readers. Miss Thoreau, who made us a short visit in the fall of '63, gave us a humorous account of her wig, and other interesting matters of her personality, showing her not to be an exception to the usual eccentricities of genius.

With the kindest regards to your beloved wife and daughters, and all my good Concord friends, particularly Mr. Emerson and family,

Believe me, in the bonds of Christian love,

Yours very truly,

Dan'l Ricketson.

CONCORD, February 12, 1865.

DEAR FRIEND, — Many thanks for your kind thoughts of me and mine. And especially of my daughter's story. Your own and daughters' hearty words about its spirit and influence gave us pleasure. The book has provoked much criticism, has been widely read, and is winning an acceptance with discerning persons as surprising to its author as it is encouraging.

Immediately after your letter came to hand, I hastened to read it to *the Thoreaus*. What you say of Henry was most grateful to them. Miss Sophia desired me to say that but for the press of cares, your letters would not have been left so long unacknowledged and unanswered. She has been busily engaged in overlooking her brother's papers, copying some, reading the proof-sheets of the books of *Cape Cod* and the *Letters*, finding no moment for correspondence. Besides, her mother's infirmity has been an additional and constant call upon her hands and heart.

Henry's letters are to appear soon, and will increase his fame. You will be pleased to learn that there remains matter for a book or two of *Politics*, one or more of *Morals*, and several volumes of *Field* and *Table-Talk*, the choicest reading all, and to be printed sometime.

You speak of the spring of '57, and of having passed through many experiences since. Happy man to have known changes at your age! I trust the keys of life are in your keeping now.

Lately it has seemed as if the call had come for me to speak not in parlors alone, and privately, but from public platforms and pulpits, as if our right thinkers and best men's utterances needed to be followed out into clearness, to be complemented in assertions of a *Personal God*, a vital theology, answering to the claims of this revolutionary time. Neither James Bushnell, Phillips, Emerson, quite content me. And yet these if any have good words to speak and the gifts for speaking them eloquently. You may have noticed in the Boston papers our advertisement of some Sunday evening lectures, to be given by these and others. I have my chance, too, and gave my own last Sunday evening on *American Religion*, by way of an opening. Have been also at Lynn and Haverhill speaking lately. Certainly men need teaching badly enough when any words of mine can help them. Yet I would fain believe that not I, but the Spirit, the Person, sometimes speaks, to revive and spare.

Come and see me and let us talk over the land matters again.

With pleasant memories of your family, I remain,

Your friend,

A. Bronson Alcott.

Mr. Ricketson:

My dear Sir, — Mr. Alcott allows me to add a few words to his letter for my own sake.

I received a kind long letter from you, to which had I been a theologian or given to arguing, should

have replied without delay, but being neither a religious or spiritual minded person, I left it to the higher powers to acknowledge and accept.

My gifts are few, what I have are for use and duty — I live, love, and learn — and find myself more content every day of my life, with humble conditions. Great principles and small duties define my position just now. The well accepted labors of my daughters, are the true pabulum of a mother's happiness.

The world has its charms, but home is heaven when it is the treasure-house of your offspring.

The approaching spring or summer may tempt you to Concord — it has lost much of its attraction, but there are still left those who would be pleased to see you.

I am very respectfully your obliged,

ABBY ALCOTT.

CONCORD, Feb. 12, 1865.

WALPOLE, April 22.

TO DAN'L RICKETSON:

DR SIR, — I thank you from my heart for the very appreciative testimony you have so beautifully rendered to Mr. Alcott's gifts and graces. His, certainly, are powers and glories which the world neither gave nor can take away. Our faith will increase with time and soul-culture, our hope will strengthen with love and spirit-force, our charity become all-abiding and diffusive, as the unseen and eternal are made more manifest.

Believe me most grateful for your home hospitalities to this gentle and beloved of

Yours most respectfully,

ABBY M. ALCOTT.

TO DAN'L RICKETSON, ESQ.

NEW BEDFORD, MASS., April 19, 1878.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have just been reading the interesting sketch of good Mr. Pratt written by Mr. Sanborn, and the excellent memorial poem by your daughter Louisa, to which I would add my humble testimony of respect for the good man's memory. He is indeed a great loss to your village, as well as to his family and friends. I would thank you, should opportunity offer, to present my sympathy to Mrs. Pratt and her son and his wife, with whom I have the pleasure of a slight acquaintance. I would also at this time, as I have often before felt moved to do, express to you and your daughters my sympathy for your great loss and affliction in the death of dear Mrs. Alcott for whom I have ever entertained the highest respect. In thinking of her I am reminded of Wordsworth's beautiful lines to his wife, wherein among other graces he speaks of her as a "noble woman, nobly planned." Turn to the poem for her full portrait. I too have parted with a beloved wife, after a companionship of more than forty years. She died as she had lived, in peace and tranquility of mind. You knew her well, and you also knew how unworthy I was of her. She patient, kind, self-sacrificing, while I was almost the opposite

to her in all those accomplishments that so beautify our humble nature.

I often think of you and the pleasant walks and talks we have had together, and should be glad to resume them should occasion offer so to do.

Hoping this hasty note will find you and your family well I remain,

Yours very truly,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

P. S. Should you see Channing please remember me kindly to him.

I should not close without some mention of our lamented Thoreau and his worthy family, whose old home I believe you now possess. He has left a void in Concord that can never be filled. His fame is constantly on the increase, and if, as in his last illness, he said he should be ashamed to stay in this world after so much had been done for him, as he never could repay his friends, how would the plain, dear old dogmatist now feel to see his name so honored at home and abroad.

I should like also for you to remember me in terms of friendship and respect to Mr. Emerson. Neither do I forget our old friend, Farmer Hosmer. He might have been born one hundred and fifty years ago just as well so far as modern fashion has affected him. I am sorry that the old house of "Ebby Hubbard" is gone. Concord should keep her old landmarks. The old parsonage (Manse of Hawthorne) will doubtless remain. But I must close this afterlogue. Semper idem.

Concord, April 24, 1878.

Dear Friend, — On returning from Greenwood, where I passed last Sunday, I find your most acceptable epistle, and wish I may return a fitting acknowledgment for your kind sympathy, and appreciation of departed ones of our mutual acquaintance.

Life can never be the same after a companion for half of one's existence here has disappeared from this scene of mortality. Wordsworth's tribute might have been fitly addressed to the memory of my ascended partner — as to yours, I doubt not, from what I knew of her virtues. The more the incentives now, my friend, to works worthy of both of them. And fortunately I am blessed with perfect health, I may add youthfulness of spirits, and will not disdain to round off my century, — God and good angels willing it. It is a fortunate time to live in and work nobly.

Since last November I have been living with my daughters in the Thoreau house on Main Street. All of us but Louisa are in good health, and she is resting a little and recruiting for future work. May has found a friend abroad. She writes last from Havre, and appears to be happy with her Switzer.

Yes, Thoreau's fame is in the ascendant. A braver person has hardly trodden this Globe in our day. Channing I never meet now, nor Hosmer often.

Emerson is less abroad than formerly. He pleads his old age when I meet him. He lectures, I read, this evening for Old South.

You speak of "the pleasant walks and talks we have had together, and how you would be glad to resume them." Come on then, and pass a day or two with us, if it were but to recall those old times!

Remembrances to the Doctor and lady, and a query about that bust of Thoreau moulded by your son Walton.

Very truly yours,

A. Bronson Alcott.

VI

LETTERS OF WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING AND FRANK B. SANBORN

LETTERS OF WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING AND FRANK B. SANBORN

My dear Mr. Ricketson, — There is a little matter of business to which I would ask your assistance. Possibly I may leave Concord, and my aim would be to get a small place in the vicinity of a large town, with some land, and if possible near to some *one* person with whom I might in some measure fraternize.

Knowest thou, O man of monies and affairs, of such a place in thy vicinity, or in the town of New Bedford, in thy locality? If so, I will come there and look at it.

I am a poet, or of a poetical temper or mood, with a very limited income, both of brains and of monies. This world is rather a sour world. But as I am with you equally an admirer of Cowper, why should I not prove a sort of unnecessary addition to the neighborhood, possibly?

And how is New Bedford, and hast thou, O lover of Cowper, any means of renting houses adapted to poets, seeking roofs to cover them? Something moderate, with one large room on the first floor, if possible 24×24. Do not object to an old house, must be near schools and church (old fashion Unitarian if

possible), no objection to groves, lakes, seas, or rivers, in the neighborhood.

Come, my neighbor, thou hast now a new occupation, the setting up of a poet and literary man, one who loves old books, old garrets, old wine, old pipes, and (last, not least) Cowper.

We might pass the winter in comparing variorum editions of our favorite authors, and the summers in walking and horticulture.

This is a grand scheme of life. All it requires is the house of which I spake. I think one in middle life feels averse to change, and especially of local change. The *lares et penates* love to establish themselves, and desire no moving.

But the fatal hour may come, when bidding one long, one last adieu, to those weather-beaten *Penates*, we sally forth with Don Quixote once more to strike our lances into some new truth, or life, or man.

Yours in Cowper

W. E. Channing.

My address: Harrison Square Massachusetts.

Nov., 1856.

Harrison Sq., Dec. 20, 1858.

Dear Sir, — I trust you will not think I have neglected your favor, which I received too late to make any practical use of, and was also away when the last note arrived. I trust now that I will be able to come to Tarkiln Hill station the first week of January. Should I be able to do so, I will send you word a day or two previous.

I am greatly indebted for your prompt and cordial answer, and am also much pleased that H. D. T. has been down and enjoyed himself so much as he says among the Middleboro ponds. He is so noble and admirable a man, that I wonder he was not long since canonized, or raised up among men as an elder or a guide. But he is too good for a supereminent position, which he dwarfs by the majesty of his genius. Let you and I in our dying moments lack not one thought and one feeling if not many more for this admirable man, who has not only instructed us by his excellent writings, but has also led us forward, to do and to dare, by the example of a brave and generous life.

I am afraid that our admirable friend will not readily disconnect himself from the old associations, the old shoes of his native village, and that both he and I must be buried in the same fields which we have so long trod. But as often as he can be had in Bristol County I am certain she will be no loser, and who knows but that some day the same prolific pen which hath done so much to illustrate Middlesex may give forth by its native excellence the features of our New Bedford landscape.

Alas! if the world was not so rich by the possession of H. D. T., we might inquire why there were not more of the same kidney. And yet let us be thankful for even the faintest splendor of genius. She has her sunsets and sunrises, her seas and woods, but one soul of genius, one heart of oak and hand of fire, throws all her greatest splen-

dors, her liveliest superiorities, ineffably into the shade.

If H. D. T. were not our best writer, if he were only our best man, that were enough. Singular that so excellent a soul should also have had so superior a scribbling faculty.

You who have lately come into the good graces of our worthy friend may not perceive the whole value of my fleeting eulogium, and may suspect me of touching too high topics. But I so long enjoyed the companionship of our excellent friend, I have sat so long at his feet, and experienced so greatly the worth of his genius, that surely I am qualified to write at some length of his merits, foremost of which is that unfailing truth and reality of his heart and life, which, as it cannot be too highly valued in fact, so neither can it be too highly praised in words.

God grant that you may find in him, in the midst of this stricken and suffering world, a solace for your soul and a comfort to your apprehensions.

Ricketson, H. D. T. is a man on whom you may wholly rely, and who will not be found faulty in the judgment day, *dies illa*, &c.

Yours for the best,

W. E. C.

D. Ricketson, Esq.

Concord, Mass., July 21st, 1898.

Dear Friends, Anna and Walton Ricketson! It occurs to me that you may like to see what Mr.

Channing has been saying of your father; you will know how to make allowance for his modes of expression.

What he says of the Journal perhaps relates only to the few years when he was much at Brooklawn; but it suggests to me that there may be a great deal in the volumes concerning our Transcendentalist circle which it might be well to publish at some time. Have you ever had a thought of that?

Yours truly,

F. B. Sanborn.

"He has haunted my mind," said C. to-night; "he was a man so peculiar; there are none left like him, — never was there another. He was the quickest of all men in his movements, — quick as a dog: he would see the teamsters coming down his hill from Freetown with loads of wood, or something else, and he would rush out without his hat, hail them, and scold them for ill-treating their cattle or horses. He had the evils of the world on his mind all the time; being a reformer, could not get them out of his mind. He was always in a hurry, flying from one thing to another. He seldom sat in the house with the family, unless there were strangers there; but as soon as the meal was over would go out to the Shanty, and while I sat by the open wood fire and smoked, he sat down at the table by the window and wrote in his Journal, paying no attention to me. What has become of all those journals? There were thousands of pages. They

would be very valuable if preserved. Where do you suppose they are now?

"I used to walk up to Brooklawn every Sunday while I lived in New Bedford (1856–1858), not by the road in front of the house, but through the woods on a road behind. Sometimes we would drive off to a lake in the suburbs of Freetown, ten miles off, taking a stock of provisions, and spend the day there; then get back in time for tea, when 'Uncle James' (Thornton) would be there from the town, where he had a room. After tea, Mr. Ricketson and I would walk back part way with him; he was the mildest, most amiable man conceivable, — always called Mr. R. 'Daniel.' Everybody admired 'Uncle James,' — and Mrs. R. was another sweet and amiable person."

VII

LETTERS OF "THEO." BROWN

LETTERS OF "THEO." BROWN

Worcester, Mass., Jan. 19, 1868.

Mr. Ricketson:

Dear Sir, — I have several times of late thought of a walk I had with you (my friend Blake was there too) one summer afternoon many summers ago, at Middleborough Pond, through a stony pasture, in which you told me you had been wont to string your thoughts into rhyme, and, following my inclination, I have taken my pen to recall the time to you.

If any of your time is as cheap to you as much of mine is to me, you can afford to read it and possibly to answer it.

There is a bird which every summer keeps me in constant remembrance of that afternoon, — it is the bird whose song, according to your translation, is "please don't grieve."

We reclined upon a bank near some water, I think, awhile, and talked of Thoreau, whom we all had quite an admiration for.

It may interest you to hear of the last visit which I with Blake made at his (Thoreau's) house a short time before he died. We took our skates, and then the cars as far as Framingham. From some two miles north of Framingham we took to the river and

skated nearly to Thoreau's house. We found him pretty low, but well enough to be up in his chair. He seemed glad to see us. Said we had not come much too soon. We spent some hours with him in his mother's parlor, which overlooks the river that runs all through his life. There was a beautiful snowstorm going on the while which I fancy inspired him, and his talk was up to the best I ever heard from him, — the same depth of earnestness and the same infinite depth of fun going on at the same time.

I wish I could recall some of the things he said. I do remember some few answers he made to questions from Blake. Blake asked him how the future seemed to him. "Just as uninteresting as ever," was his characteristic answer. A little while after he said, "You have been skating on this river; perhaps I am going to skate on some other." And again, "Perhaps I am going up country." He stuck to nature to the last.

He seemed to be in an exalted state of mind for a long time before his death. He said it was just as good to be sick as to be well, — just as good to have a poor time as a good time, — the which, if we could always realize, the little bird referred to above might have to find other audience for his singing.

Have you been to Concord since his death? The river still runs and the birds still sing and the flowers blossom, but to my eye nature somehow looked bereft of her lover. The loss seemed so great that one could easily fancy that the river would hence-

forth run only tears, and that the bobolinks even, if they sung at all, would sing in the minor key.

I think it no small achievement to so live as to raise the value of one's surroundings. That Thoreau has done.

I suppose I may feel a little more acquainted with you than you do with me from the fact of having heard Thoreau talk so much about you.

Yours truly, THEO. BROWN.

WORCESTER, February 21, 1869.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — My friend Blake has just been in to smoke with me before going to bed, and he read me a letter he had from you recently. Your mention in it of our landing on the south shore of Middleboro pond incites me to *begin* at least a note to you, for I have a very pleasant recollection of our crossing that pond and also of our walk the day before through the rocky pasture — a favorite place of yours, and where I think you told us the little sparrow — whose name I don't know but whose song I do — sang to you "please don't grieve."

He always sings the same to *me* since. But I grieve, nevertheless, sometimes.

That walk is getting a good way into the past, and we are getting somewhat older. I am a great deal older. How goes the world with you?

If such a question were put to me I should have to confess that I had passed the summit some time ago.

I see the sun rise less often than I used to, and I

fear prize the day less that it makes after it has risen, — look forward with less anticipation to the spring, — am not always on hand to see the first bobolink that arrives from the south — coming in with a flourish like the hero in a play after the play gets well started — and breaks open and floods the meadow with song before alighting on the spear of grass that bends over and lets him down out of sight.

But I *remember* a few sunrises, and a spring or two with bobolinks and buttercups to them, — springs in which the great lifetide that floods everything found its way and crept up into the little private rill that fed my life, and entranced me with the old and forever new wonder and delight.

But I am perhaps giving you a larger dose of myself than our short acquaintance warrants. Your liking for Thoreau and your translation of the sparrow's song make me feel pretty well acquainted with you, and that must be my apology if one is needed for thus addressing you. I should like to hear from *you* all you feel inclined to tell.

Blake and I think of calling on you some day, or we *have* thought of doing so. He with his wife expects to go abroad next April and they may be gone a year and a half if they like it, so you will not probably see us very soon, but his going will not prevent my going to see you. It will make it all the more necessary for me.

I wish we might see you here. Don't you ever have occasion to come through Worcester?

Yours truly, THEO. BROWN.

WORCESTER, May 10, '69.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — Your note containing the proem was duly received, and, if I had followed my feelings would have been responded to then, but, fearing such promptness might alarm you and so prove detrimental to this exchange of notes of ours, I put it in my pocket, and there it has been until now. I find the date so far back as to occasion what there is of apology in the above.

If your poems read as smoothly and pleasantly as the proem I think they must be read by many more than you wrote them for. When will the volume come out? I want to see it. Methinks the birds will be heard in some of the stanzas. Judging from the proem I hardly think we shall hear the bob-o-link in them much, or if we hear him his singing will be softened from its *distance in the past.*

Have you heard of a Mr. Hotham who has built him a house on the bank of Walden pond near where Thoreau lived and has spent the winter there? I went to his house some months ago, and found him an interesting man. He said he came there out of health, and one object in coming was to regain it. Another to do some literary work he had in hand, which, by the way, he said was of a theological character. He said he chose that location in spite of it looking like following Thoreau, thinking the fact of Thoreau's having lived there in a similar way would serve as a sort of breakwater and save him answering a great many questions, which it did.

His talk about nature was very interesting to me,

and seemed much like Thoreau's. But it occurs to me that he has been written about in the papers, and probably you may have seen the accounts.

My friend Blake has gone. I think I told you of his intention of going to Europe and remaining there some year and a half, if he likes.

Now if we (Blake and I) walk together it must be on the margin of the sea, across which we can shout occasionally in the loud notes we exchange with each other.

Truly yours,

THEOPHILUS BROWN.

VIII

LETTERS OF DANIEL RICKETSON AND ALEXANDER H. JAPP, LL. D.

LETTERS OF DANIEL RICKETSON AND ALEXANDER H. JAPP, LL. D.

20 West Cedar St., Boston, U. S. A.,
Dec. 6th, 1887.

My dear Sir, — I hold the pen for my son, Walton Ricketson, with whom I am on a visit, to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of the November number of "The Welcome" magazine, with your excellent article on our friend, Henry David Thoreau. Please accept our thanks for the complimentary notice you have so gracefully given. My son is now well established in his profession, and his last work, Dawn and Twilight, — medallions, — are meeting with fine success. He and an only sister, both single, are keeping house together. My home is still in New Bedford, about sixty miles from here, in the S. E. corner of Massachusetts, Boston being our capital or metropolis. For thirty years, during the childhood and youth of my children, we resided in the country a few miles from our city, so that a good part, perhaps the best of their education, came from their familiarity with natural objects and the healthy influence of a rural life. Here it was that our beloved Thoreau, with other honored guests, visited us. He was cheerful and highly entertaining as well as instructive. As a naturalist in its most

inclusive sense, I have never met his equal. He had made a thorough study of all the plants, the feathered tribes, our native quadrupeds, and was highly endowed with historical and aboriginal lore. Besides, he was a good classical scholar, a graduate of Harvard College, and well read in European as well as Oriental literature.

It was interesting to hear him and Emerson discuss some point of ethics, perhaps, wherein there was a difference of opinion, and where I have thought Thoreau had the best of it. To compare him with Emerson, he had not the courtly urbanity, but equal dignity and self-poise of manner, — *Arcades ambo* nevertheless. No one who knew them as well as their intimate friends did, could fail to see the great originality of each.

As for myself, if you will excuse an episode of egoism, I have achieved but little, nor have I desired fame. I have rather been the friend of good and noted men and women. Still, from my loophole of retreat, I have caught an occasional glance at the world of men and manners, while I have never been able to mix much with it, always returning from my contact to my woods and fields as with a native instinct for fresh air and freedom. I have not been idle, however; besides making two homes in the country, with all their attendant cares of rural architecture and landscape gardening, I was for a quarter of a century deeply interested in the great cause of abolition, which resulted in the cruel and demoralizing civil war and the freedom of the slave. Of

Quaker stock, whose ancestry dates back to the days of Fox and Penn, I abhor war and violence. In fact, I am a Quaker, or Friend, rather, still, and should have preferred in addressing you, to have adopted the simple manner of expression.

I have some acquaintance with the press, though my name has probably never reached your ears. For many years I corresponded with the late William Howitt, an interesting file of whose letters I still keep. I think England has hardly done him justice. He had much of the fire and patriotism of John Bright, with a broader humanity, and would have honored any post in the realm.

One Englishman, at least, early recognized and sought out Thoreau, — the late Thomas Cholmondeley, Esq., an Oxford man, of Condover Hall, Shrewsbury, Shrops., who spent several weeks with Thoreau at his home in Concord, about which time they paid me a visit. He was afterwards married, and died on his wedding tour in Italy from malarial fever. A fine, highly cultivated English gentleman. For some years I corresponded with his brother Reginald, but we have heard nothing from him of late.

Another correspondent I had for many years, the late Rev. William Barnes, the Dorset Poet, a clergyman of the old school of Gilbert White and William Gilpin. He died about a year ago at the age of eighty-six years. I have sent copies of my letters from him to his son, who is also a rector of the Church, as a biography of him is contemplated. I

have at present no correspondent in England. I have outlived most of mine here, my age nearing seventy-five years.

I have published privately somewhat — among them a volume of poems entitled "The Autumn Sheaf," 1869. But, as I have intimated, I am unknown in the world of letters.

My son and daughter wish to be cordially remembered to you. He proposes to send herewith photographs of his Dawn and Twilight.

I am very truly yours,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

48 FITZROY ST., FITZROY SQ., LONDON, W.,
Dec. 27th, 1887.

MY DEAR SIR, — It gave me the liveliest pleasure to receive and read your friendly letter of December 6th. The details you give me respecting your life were most interesting to me; the more so since in so many respects they suggest something in my own, as to strivings and ideals in certain directions, though, as yet, I have not very much passed Dante's "Midway line of life." I, too, have striven for freedom and fresh air; for escape, as far as circumstances would allow, from the dominations of social tyrannies and exactions. As soon as my position allowed it, I established myself in a little house in Essex, in the most varied and romantic part of it, near Colchester, and spent half the week there, amongst flowers and trees and birds, rejoicing in the beauty and blessing of it all. . . .

I am always busy on some theme or another, and have more to do than I can well manage.

I am delighted in what you tell me of your family arrangements. It must be a pleasant change for you to go from New Bedford to Boston now and then, and get stimulus and suggestion — this quickens the sense of quiet enjoyment in rural sights and sounds.

I am with you in what you say of dear William Howitt. Mrs. Howitt gave, if I remember right, in *Good Words*, some admirable reminiscences of their life in some periods — genial, unaffected, faithful. No doubt you saw these and enjoyed them. Barnes's faithful Dorsetshire, in which he embodied some beautiful fancies and ideals, has long been a delightsome study of mine. I will look out with the more interest and curiosity for the Life, knowing that some of his letters to you may be there. If I am not too intrusive and exacting, it would please me much to have a copy of your volume, "The Autumn Sheaf," if you can spare one. I might find some chance of referring to it or of quoting from it.

Did you ever put on paper any record of your work in the Abolition cause, and impressions of the men who were active in it with you and whom you knew? Did you know the Tappans, Garrison, Gerrit Smith? I would be glad if you would tell me of this. The abolitionist work has my warmest sympathy, and many of the workers my deepest reverence and admiration. I have written here and there on the subject, and also on the progress of the

freedmen since their emancipation in the "Sunday Magazine," &c., &c.

I am much pleased to know that Walton's Dawn and Twilight have had a good success. You mention that he meant to send me photos. As yet I have not received them; but I was to blame in not sending him a note with "The Welcome" with my town address of more recent years. I do hope, through this cause, they have not gone astray, for I would prize them — much. At the time I sent "The Welcome" I was suffering from rheumatism complicated with a writer's cramp in the arms, and *shyed* every line of writing I could avoid, dictating for pen, which I found a most trying and painful operation. Thank God! Have got rid of that now.

It is one of the dreams of my life to see America. Mr. James T. Fields gave me pressing invitations to spend a summer with him at his house, Gambrell Cottage, at Manchester-by-the-Sea; but, alas! he will not be there when I come. I should like to wander about Concord, thinking of Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne; to walk leisurely about Boston, and to look at New York in passing. It is a dream; I do not know if it will ever be anything else; but some cherished memory-shaded spots seem so familiar that I might find the reality quite different. But I remember Wordsworth's "Three Yarrows."

When you write to me again, which I hope you will do, do adopt the style of address, pray, which you find most easy and spontaneous. Give my most

grateful remembrances to Walton and his sister in Boston, and

Believe me, dear friend,

Always yours most sincerely,

ALEX. H. JAPP.

48 FITZROY ST., FITZROY SQ., LONDON, W.,
Feb. 15, 1888.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I am sure you must be thinking me very remiss in not having written sooner to acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter and also the two volumes of your poems you were so good as to forward me by the same post. But I have had no end of unexpected things to occupy me. The condition of my poor wife is only worse, and what with her sufferings and her sleeplessness, I find that the strain is so great that I cannot keep up my regular routine work, and fall into arrears, and then the happy moments of comparative escape come so seldom now that even trifles sometimes seem heavy tasks. So my correspondence has suffered in a way it does not usually; and I am sure you will accept for once my excuses.

Well, I did not lose much time in reading your poems, finding in them the honest utterance of a loving and earnest mind, keenly affected by the sufferings of others, and always intent on kindliness, — a nature too, with the finest impulses to nature-ward, and an eye for all sweet and tender and lovely forms. Particularly do I like "Autumn Twilight" and the "Winter Sketch."

"Such reward kind Nature gives
To him who in her quiet lives."

I am exceedingly pleased to have these volumes to add to my library, and thank you most sincerely for sending them, and for the pleasure which the reading of them has given me.

I wonder you do not put on paper some of your reminiscences, particularly of the Anti-Slavery men with whom you were for so many years in close association. I am sure your sketches would contain much of value, interest, and influence. I hope you will do so some day soon. Your poem to Whittier I have cut out and put into my album for such things.

Yes, it would delight me to show you the "Colchester" country. There we have traces of four civilizations: first Romans, then Frizians, then Danes, then Saxons. The northeast coast just at the point is particularly rich — not in old buildings and walls alone, as in Colchester, but remains of Roman dwellings or camps in out-of-the-way corners. At a farm on the side of the Colne, near Alresford — Alsford (as it is locally called) — below Wivenhoe, whole streets of Roman villas have been unveiled to view below the earth, only a foot and a half or so; the farmer being surprised at turning up, when ploughing, scores on scores of little cubelets, of different colors, all of one size, with the angles as sharp as when first made. These had formed portions of mosaic floorings, and when the ground was open one could trace out the whole *lie* of the settlement. I went there

frequently and was much interested. And beyond this, the scenery on some parts of the Colne is fine, though the river in its upper portions is disappointing. We have here what you have not — relics of antiquity that we can connect with a great long-past civilization, whereas your Red Indian relics, great as they are, tell only of a semi-wild race; but they have their own attractions too.

I wish I could send you some return in kind for your volumes. But at present I have no quite recent product from the press beyond magazine and review literature; but by and by, I hope to be able to gratify myself in this regard.

Since I went to stay in the country I have done a little in the way of more systematic observation of nature, and have published one or two essays in the "Gentleman's Magazine;" others I trust will come towards the end of the year in "Good Words," etc., etc.

Now I do hope you will not allow the shortness of my letter to hinder you from giving me another soon; the peculiarly painful position in which I am placed just now must be my excuse for so worthless an epistle, and next time I hope that I may do better.

Believe me, my dear friend,

Always yours sincerely,

ALEX. H. JAPP.

P. S. Whilst I was in the midst of writing this letter, I received the photographs of Dawn and Twilight, which have had three journeys now across

the Atlantic. They are worth it, if measured by the pleasure their fine ideality and beauty of outline and expression have given me. I wish I could see the marble. I may some day. Please to tell Walton this, as I won't be able to give him a letter for a day or two, and remember me most kindly to both at Boston when writing.

A. H. J.

AUTUMN TWILIGHT.

Chill the Autumn wind is blowing;
Evening throws her veil around;
Soon on hill-top and in valley
Naught but darkness will be found.

Reft of all the Summer glory
Stand the stately forest trees;
Where so late sweet notes reëchoed,
Swells alone the sighing breeze.

But there is a charm in Autumn
For the contemplative mind;
Nature aye will teach the Reason
Truth in all her walks to find.

Leave the school of worldly wisdom,
Thou of thought and careworn brow;
And for Him who rules the seasons,
Learn in solemn awe to bow.

Look abroad upon the landscape,
Meadows, hills, and woods around;

Are not these more grateful teachers
Than in human lore are found?

Search the broad, blue, arching heavens
To their vast empyrean height;
Think of Him above who made them
By His awful word of might.

One clear beam from Nature's teaching,
Once received into thy heart,
Shall awaken more true wisdom
Than a score from halls of Art.

A WINTER SKETCH.

When Winter's horn blows loud and clear,
And snow drifts down the silent glen,
When slowly goes the waning year,
And few of Nature's smiles are seen,
Then to the woods I often go,
Heedless alike of wind or snow.

'T is not when naught but smiles are seen,
And fields are gay with new-blown flowers,
When the old woods are robed in green,
That Nature shows her greatest powers;
But when her hidden forces rise,
And clouds and storms deform the skies.

For then more boldly rush the streams,
The waterfall more loudly roars,
And to the gale the raven screams,
As o'er the lofty pines he soars.

And the riven branches loudly crack,
While echo sends the tumult back.

'T is then the mighty sea is tossed,
And the frail bark to the tempest stoops,
When billows lash the rock-girt coast,
Where the gray sea-gull slowly swoops;
And on the wind is often heard
The voice of some storm-driven bird.

Then far within the woods' retreat
With eager steps I gladly hie,
Where each familiar haunt I greet,
As old friends in adversity.
For here a countless store I find,
That on me shed their influence kind.

The robin flits across my way,
As though he would my coming hail,
The black-cap hops from spray to spray,
And near by whirrs the startled quail;
While frisking on some neighboring bough,
The squirrel eyes me as I go.

The green moss peeps forth from the snow,
And sweetly smiles at Winter's frown,
While with their load the maples bow,
And humbly wear their winter crown.
Such rich reward kind Nature gives
To him who in her quiet lives.

1838.

New Bedford, Mass., U. S. A.,
Jan. 3, 1890.

My dear Friend, — I have been reading over again your letters to me, and am so much impressed with their friendly spirit, as well as sentiments and tastes similar to my own, that I feel an apology is almost required of me for allowing so long a time to have passed since I received your last at the time of your great affliction and bereavement in the loss of your beloved wife. As time mellows all our woes, I trust you have found its benign influence upon your own great sorrow, while it will remain hallowed in memory, and the same sweet spirit ever be present to comfort you on your earthly pilgrimage. You must remember that I am an old man, for I am far advanced in my seventy-seventh year, while I conclude that you are hardly of middle age. In your letter of July 5, 1888, you intimate possibilities of visiting friends in Buenos Ayres, of a trip to Norway the next year, "at the time when the midnight sun is at its best." Also a future prospect of America (U. S.). Whether you have or have not performed all this or a portion of it I am of course unaware; so, should you have the goodness to reply, I shall be pleased to hear.

As for myself, having never been capable of much endurance in body or mind in these accumulated years, I have been obliged to follow the good advice of Emerson in his poem, "Terminus," and have long ago taken in the sail that so smoothly and sweetly wafted me along in youth's gay prime.

I am just now recovering from an attack in October last of acute bronchitis, so that I am weaker and more sensitive to atmospheric changes than formerly. Our New England climate is less agreeable than that of old England; and we have much more reason, if we have any good right to grumble, than the native-born Briton. As much as I am attached to my native land, and deeply so to this spot where I have spent nearly all my long life, settled by my forefathers over two hundred years ago, I have often felt when reading the works of the great geniuses of our Fatherland, particularly the grand old poets and lovers of nature, that I should have been as happy, if not more so, had my lot been cast there. Now I can only hope, D. V., to find in the realms beyond those to whom I owe so much of this life's happiness. Am I not repeating you, dear friend, in these aspirations?

Since we corresponded, I have passed several letters with Mr. H. S. Salt, who is writing the life of Thoreau, and speaks of having received kind assistance from Dr. Japp.

I will now close, hoping that you are comfortably settled once more in your house, and enjoying the gentler pursuits which a lover of nature and wholesome art values as his best earthly possessions. I need hardly add that I remain, with much esteem,

Your attached friend,

Dan'l Ricketson.

THE LIMES, ELMSTEAD, COLCHESTER,
Jan. 31, 1890.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — It was with the liveliest pleasure that I received your letter of the 3rd January, which I did not do till after a little delay owing to my having come down here and left 48 Fitzroy Street. I have managed to pull through this winter, running up and down to London, but it has taken so much out of me, and owing to the exposure I have suffered so much from rheumatism, eczema, and bad chest, that I am afraid I cannot face another winter in the country, much as I like it: so that this at the end of the coming autumn will be reduced merely to a summer resort, and new arrangements made. But, in spite of all, I have managed to get through a fair amount of work — in work nowadays I find almost my only anodyne for the grief that *wears*, though I am only about fifty, and feel I have a good bit of energy and work in me yet. They tell me — those who have known me from youth — that I do not look changed, but looks are misleading. I feel ever so much changed.

I have written or edited three books within the past year, and have been steadily writing in three or four magazines and as many weekly newspapers, and another volume under the assumed name of Conderpray, under which *nom de plume* I have done a lot before. I have sent several things to Mrs. Farman Pratt, — do you know her? — for "Wide Awake," which I suppose will come soon, both prose and verse, and she asks me for more in the same lines. In the

"Sun," a new Scotch magazine, I have been writing a series "In the Youth of the World," of which I send you by book post the two first numbers as specimens. (There is a misprint of "altar" for "atlas" in the very first few lines, which please correct, as I forgot to do so before putting up the packet.) I also enclose some notices in the parcel of some of my recent work. By the way, there is an attempt at blank verse, "Sir Guy of Devon," etc., by me in the "Sun," which was reviewed in the funniest way, being anonymous, and great wonder expressed at the identity of "this promising disciple of the Tennysonian school." When you write again let me know what you think of it. I tried a volume of poems — did I send you a prospectus before? — but I did not get quite the number of subscribers that would have saved me from risk, and, at the present time, I cannot afford to run much risk. I wonder if one or two subscribers could be found in Boston. Had James T. Fields been living, he would have helped me, I know. But I am not acquainted with any one such as him there now.

I am sorry to hear of your suffering so much, but trust that the spring weather, which, I hope, may come to you with this letter, may be in your favor. You have now reached a long age, and I remember that some one — I think Hervey, Pope's Sporus — remarked that as "we get on in life the ways get rougher," which I am afraid is true, with but few exceptions. I begin to feel it so myself already.

I did not, for the reason I have given above,

manage my tour, though I still live in the hope of yet seeing America; and of seeing you when I come. What delightful days we could spend — would you not accompany me to Concord and walk along that now classic stream *Musketiquid*, wander around Walden and think of Thoreau, and find out Emerson's woodlot where he walked and meditated, where we could walk and meditate and think of this new Plato in his new grove of Academe, and go to and look at the Old Manse, and muse on Hawthorne, and his strange, dreamy, eerie genius, so compounded of sun and of shadowy cobwebby twilight, like the wine that is mellowed to the height in the dark cellars, and owes something to the darkness and the cobwebs? Ah me, so we could do our journey; but, if we do not manage that, shall we not dream our dream, and make it as real as the fact? Yes, we can, and we will: such power is in the spirit framed to friendly and pious resolutions.

The papers I enclose in the packet will tell you all my titles, which preserve for title-pages, where they ought to be; though for one of the very youngest LL. D.'s ever made at Glasgow, having been honored to stand by Principal Tallock, Professor Wood, and such men in receiving it in 1874. I am glad you were able to give my friend Mr. Salt some help; he will do Thoreau with the finest sympathy, for he is a lover of Thoreau himself: a man of fine scholarship and sensibility. He was at one time an Eton Master: but found it too restrictive, gave it up, and betook himself to literature and the most simple life.

I enclose or annex a little notice of reissue of a book of mine which made a fair success in America some years ago, and was widely noticed. This cheap edition will have much of new. Mr. Fields in his lectures on De Quincey used to praise it highly.

I have just come back from the funeral of one of the sweetest and most original of our young poets, Mrs. Pfeiffer — Emily Pfeiffer — who has survived her husband only one year. When I saw her late in December she was so hopeful of betterness and so full of schemes of work, both literary and philanthropic, that her death is a personal loss to me. Her sonnets are very fine, a few almost equal to Mrs. Barrett Browning. I had written a sketch of her from personal knowledge and personal study of her works, for a magazine, which was stereotyped for the March number before she died, and I had to go and mend it up and add an addendum to it: and she never had the pleasure to see what she had herself so largely contributed to.

But I must pull up, else I fear that you will feel, what with my garrulity and my bad writing, I am likely to become a *bore:* but somehow I feel a kind of familiarity such as would only be possible to minds somewhat kindred, and when I once begin, feel inclined to go on.

With the kindest remembrances to Miss Ricketson, and Mr. Walton, believe me to remain,

Always yours most sincerely,

Alex. H. Japp.

Mr. John Hogg, 13 Paternoster Row, announces as in the press a new edition in one volume, of H. A. Page's "Thomas De Quincey, His Life and Writings, With Unpublished Correspondence." This new edition will furnish new matter, and will be thoroughly revised — in great part rewritten; Mr. Page having once more, with Mr. De Quincey's family, gone over papers and letters hitherto unexamined. The volume will include portraits of De Quincey, Professor Wilson, and Sir William Hamilton, from originals in possession of Mr. John Hogg.

NEW BEDFORD, MASS., U. S. A.,
Feb. 18, 1890.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Your welcome letter of the 31st ultimo came duly to hand, together with the "Sun" magazine for October and November, also the prospectus of your forthcoming volume of poems. I have re-read "The Echo of a Song," so marked for delicacy and beauty, and make use of a quotation by my dear old friend and correspondent, the Rev. William Barnes, when some twenty years ago I sent him the introductory lines to my "Autumn Sheaf" followed by the volume itself. "Ex unque conem," which I hope and doubt not, will be better verified by yours than mine.

The amount of literary labor you have performed and are still engaged in, quite surprises me, but I doubt not has greatly alleviated the bitterness of your bereavements and sorrows. It is Southey, I think, who says: —

> "Heaven hath assigned
> Two sovereign remedies for human woes,
> Religion, surest, firmest, first and best,
> And strenuous labor next."

Your scholarship must be very large to comprise such a variety of topics as you write upon so instructively and so well. I have rather been a friend of good scholars than one myself. My classical knowledge is quite limited, both in ancient and modern lore. My poems, if I may so speak of them, were written, as I trust they evince, as the simple record of my own daily experiences and observations. I suppose that I am culpably deficient in the laws of versification — a slight knowledge of which only I learned from my old Adam's Latin Grammar, and never rightly attempted to apply them. To one accustomed to the modern English poets, I should think they might appear very puerile — to me, however, they are a comfort in my old age, as pleasant pictures of past and happier days. Perhaps a critic like Alfred Austin, who so severely descants upon the artificial productions of modern English poets, might see in my humble lines somewhat that harmonized with the natural love of song in the heart of man as coming from the groves and fields and other rural objects which my dear Master, the good Cowper, so beautifully describes: he, for me, is the truest and best of all old England's grand array of poetic genius. From the time when I, a boy of some fifteen years, found a mutilated copy of "The Task" in a chest with other old books, among them

"Rasselas" and "The Pleasures of Hope," to the present, I love him and his work before all others.

Am I too egotistic? If so, I hope you will pardon me as excusable in an old fellow of nearly seventy-seven years, if consciousness of that base metal does not preclude excuse.

I should be very happy to aid in the introduction of your literary works in this country, but I have little or no ability or power so to do; so far as my immediate interest is concerned, I may not be wanting. I sent your letter to my son and daughter, which they read with friendly interest and returned. They are again settled in Concord, Mass., the home of Thoreau, Emerson, Alcott, &c. Except for the gradual failure of old age, I am well and remain,

Yours very truly,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

NEW BEDFORD, MASS., U. S. A.,
Jan. 30, 1893.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have often thought of you since we last corresponded, and now I am prompted to write to you, and thank you for the poems which came duly to hand. I have read a goodly number of them and my wife has read to me from time to time many more. I am not fully qualified to judge of their merits, but should think they were the product of a scholarly mind. Although I had a moderately classical education, I was a dull scholar, and failed so in my examination at Harvard College that I gave up any further trial. I read law in a desul-

tory kind of way for several years, but found myself unfit for the legal practice, and after my marriage retired from our busy town to the rural neighborhood where I spent about thirty years, engaged in a variety of rural and literary employments. My love of retirement and unambitious nature, with an early moderate estimate of my abilities, have confined me to a very limited public about my native place.

I have again been looking over your "Thoreau" with renewed interest, and read over your letters to me, all of which I have preserved. I find also in "Men of our Time" or some such title of a work in our City Library: Alexander Hay Japp, LL. D., &c., born 1840 at Dunn, Forfarshire, Scotland; educated at Montrose Academy and at the University of Edinburgh." I am pleased to find you are a fellow-countryman of Burns. I was for several years an honorary member of a "Burns Club" now extinct, in our city. We also celebrated Scott's Centenary (Aug. 15, 1871) in our city hall. Some of Tannahill's songs are nearly equal to those of Burns. The older ones of Allan Ramsay I also admire.

I had no idea you were so voluminous an author and writer until I read a list of your works in the beforementioned record. I well see that you have the "*ars poetæ*" far beyond my humble attempts, which are at the best but the "*disjecta membra.*" Among the poems I particularly note the one "In Memoriam, E. F. J." That which comes from the heart goes to the heart.

As I am not quite certain of your present address

and feel a little uncertain of your receiving this, I will close,

As ever, yours truly and cordially,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

P. S. My eightieth birthday is drawing near, so excuse this rambling note.

NEW BEDFORD, MASS., U. S. A.,
Jan. 22, 1894.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have been reading your admirable book, "Hours in my Garden," and do not hesitate to say that I should place you in the honorable company of Gilpin, White of Selborne, *et hoc genus omne*. The mechanical work of the book evinces your great oversight, particularly in the illustrations. It will I trust become a classic with ingenuous youth of the rising generation as well as with the older ones of ours. I fear, however, I am placing you with myself one generation in advance, as I am already an octogenarian, and you yet in the heyday of middle life. I was four years older than my friend Thoreau, who died in 1862, at the age of forty-five. Since then his contemporaries, Longfellow, Emerson, Alcott, Lowell, and Whittier have passed on, while I, the least of all, still remain, which I attribute largely to my quiet and unambitious life, and an early conviction of my lack of qualification for any great sphere.

I have had the usual experiences of men in the way of joy and sorrow, among these the loss of a beloved mother when I was about fourteen, the

beloved wife of my youth and mother of my children and cherished companion of more than forty years, also my dear and beautiful youngest daughter, and a grandson at the age of twelve years.

But I did not intend to write my biography, so will leave off.

I think I acknowledged the receipt of your book of sonnets, which I have read more of since, and find many very attractive, particularly those wherein your own personal bereavements are seen in the tender words which only a deep experience can utter. I hope that time has softened your sorrow, and that your heart has not been left desolate.

My life has largely been a pleasant one, and I feel grateful to the great and good Giver, and to my earthly kind father, who left me a sufficient patrimony for my quiet, economic way of life.

Hoping to hear from you once more, and with best wishes for your happiness, I remain,

Very truly your sincere and obliged friend,

Dan'l Ricketson.

IX

LETTERS OF DANIEL RICKETSON AND HENRY S. SALT

LETTERS OF DANIEL RICKETSON AND HENRY S. SALT

New Bedford, Mass., U. S. A.,
Nov. 5, 1889.

Dear Sir, — Yours of the 18th ult. was received on the 28th, finding me quite ill with acute bronchitis, from which I am slowly recovering, and take this my first opportunity to answer your letter.

Among the foreign essays on Thoreau, that of "H. A. Page," A. H. Japp, LL. D., 13 Albion Square, Dalston, London, which appeared several years ago, from his high appreciation and genial style, has met with much approval here. With Mr. J. I have passed several letters, the last informing me of his great bereavement in the loss of his wife. I do not know that he intends writing anything further about Thoreau, and I am willing to afford you any help in my power for your proposed work.

I have to-day found the letter written by Thoreau on his father's death, which is at your service, while in looking over a large number of letters from him I find many more interesting and characteristic of the writer than those few already published by Mr. Sanborn and others. It would be through his private correspondence to his intimate friends that he would be best known. I think that a letter or

more from Thoreau to an admiring English friend, who spent some time with him in Concord, Thomas Cholmondeley, afterwards Owen, who died in April, 1864, would be of interest. He and Thoreau made me a visit at Brooklawn, my country home, in the early part of December, 1858. After Mr. C. returned to England, some time after, I wrote to him, not knowing of his death, which was very melancholy, on his marriage tour in Italy, dying of malarial fever at Naples. My letter was answered very cordially by his brother, Reginald Cholmondeley, Esq., Condover Hall, near Shrewsbury, Shrops., and we corresponded for a year or two. As I have not heard from him for some thirty years, I fear he has long since passed on. Should he or any of his family be living, I doubt not they would meet your wishes in supplying any correspondence Thoreau may have had with his friend, as well as my letters. I could also supply the letters of R. C. to me.

Letters showing the strong personal admiration of a well-educated and travelled English gentleman like Mr. Thomas Cholmondeley would add much to your book.

I think Thoreau also corresponded with William Allingham, poet, etc., Ballyshannon, Ireland.

I should like to know a little more of your *modus operandi*. I suppose you address me in your own and not a *nom de plume*. If so, I am pleasantly reminded of Charles Lamb's "Old Bencher," Mr. S.

I have just been reading the autobiography of Mary Howitt, giving occasional sketches of William

Howitt. It has occurred to me, if you are in the way of writing biographies, William Howitt would afford you an admirable opportunity for presenting to the American as well as the English public one of the truest and most loyal writers of our time. As a friend and correspondent of himself and family I have a number of letters from them all, also an admirable daguerreotype of William Howitt, taken in London in 1846, and an excellent engraving of Mrs. Howitt, done about the same time, with accompanying letters from both.

This is not, however, Thoreau. But I cannot promise to do much for you requiring writing, as it exhausts me much, and my correspondence is too large already for an old man of seventy-six years. So please excuse this hasty scrawl as a sort of rambling, desultory answer; being far from well and strong is my excuse.

Yours cordially,

DANIEL RICKETSON.

H. S. SALT, ESQ.

38 GLOUCESTER ROAD, REGENT'S PARK,
LONDON, 18/11/89.

DEAR SIR, — I am exceedingly obliged to you for your kind letter and the copy of Thoreau's most interesting account of the death of his father. Let me first answer your question about my *modus operandi* in this volume on Thoreau which I am now preparing. My object is to give (1) a clear and succinct account of Thoreau's life, gathering up and arranging in their due order all the scattered records

of him to be found in periodicals, as well as the information given by Messrs. Channing, Sanborn, and Page. (2) A fuller and more serious estimate of Thoreau's *doctrines* than any hitherto published, and a critique of his literary qualities. The book will consist of about ten or twelve chapters, the first two thirds of it being biographical and the remaining third critical. I shall aim throughout at *interpreting* rather than criticising in the ordinary sense, it being my belief that in the case of such a real man of genius as Thoreau it is the duty of the critic to accept him thankfully, and not to carp unduly at his limitations, though of course not shutting his eyes to them.

My name is not, like H. A. Page, a *nom de plume*, though I do not know that I can claim kinship with the Mr. Salt whom Charles Lamb has immortalized. There are a great many Salts in Staffordshire and Shropshire, and Shrewsbury is my native place.

Oddly enough, I find that my relatives at Shrewsbury knew Mr. Cholmondeley; he spoke to some of them about Thoreau, and gave them copies of his books. Some weeks ago Mr. Reginald Cholmondeley (who is still living) kindly promised to look up his brother's papers, in the hope of finding Thoreau's letters, and to allow me the use of them if they are still in existence.

He has, however, been away from home lately, so there is necessarily a delay. I agree with you that Mr. Cholmondeley's high opinion of Thoreau is an important and valuable point, especially as he was

(if I mistake not) the only Englishman who saw much of Thoreau.

Dr. Japp ("H. A. Page") is a correspondent of mine, but we have never met. He has very kindly given me some assistance in my preparation of materials for this volume. He told me of the medallion portrait which your son sent him, and which he had engraved for a magazine article on Thoreau.

Speaking of myself, I may add that I was an assistant master at Eton College until a few years ago, when I gave up teaching and took to literary work. An article of mine on Thoreau, which appeared in *Temple Bar* in 1886, was reprinted in the New York *Critic*, and may possibly have met your eye.

I have published books on Shelley, James Thomson, &c., and it has always been one of my desires to write a good life of Thoreau. It will be my own fault if I do not do this now, for I have received a great deal of kind help from America.

I need not say that if you will let me print any other characteristic letters of Thoreau which you have in your possession it will be a great assistance to my book, and will put me under a great obligation to you. I would, of course, gladly pay the cost of having them copied, if copyists are to be found, for I could not think of asking you to do such laborious work; indeed, I feel ashamed to see how much you have already written on my account.

Heartily thanking you for your kindness,

I remain yours sincerely,

H. S. Salt.

Daniel Ricketson, Esq.

P. S. I am interested in what you say of William Howitt.

NEW BEDFORD, MASS., Dec. 9, 1889.

DEAR SIR, — Since I wrote you I have remembered that a volume of Thoreau's letters not now in my possession, containing several to me, was published some years ago by Mr. Sanborn, which, with others he used in his biography of Thoreau, must include about all of interest of mine. These volumes I think you informed me of having. Unless you can obtain somewhat from Mr. Cholmondeley or the poet Allingham I hardly know where you will look for new matter, and that you will be obliged to depend upon your essay on his character. On this point I can bear my own testimony, that without any formality he was remarkable in his uprightness and honesty, industrious and frugal, simple and not fastidious in his tastes, whether in food, dress, or address; an admirable conversationalist, and a good story-teller, not wanting in humor. His full blue eye, aquiline nose, and peculiar pursed lips, which even his mustache did not entirely conceal, added much to the effect of his descriptive powers. He was a man of rare courage, physically and intellectually. In the way of the former, he arrested two young fellows with horse and wagon on the lonely road leading to his hermitage at Walden pond, who were endeavoring to entrap a young woman on her way home, and took them to the village; whether they were brought to court I do not remember, and

may not have given an exact account of the affair, but it is circumstantially correct.

Intellectually, his strong and manly mind was enriched by a classical education and extensive knowledge of history, ancient and modern, and English literature — himself a good versifier, if not true poet — whose poetic character is often seen in his prose works. There are few finer passages in any author than the following, which doubtless you will remember: —

"The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted, but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere." (Walden, page 92.)

I will conclude by making a copy of lines written by me soon after his death, from a volume of pieces privately published twenty years ago, entitled "The Autumn Sheaf," three copies of which I sent to England, — one each to my honored old friends and correspondents, the late William Howitt, Rev. William Barnes, the Dorset poet, late Rector of Winterborne-came, near Dorchester, and Reginald Cholmondeley, Esq., Shrewsbury, Shrops. I mention these in case you may wish to see the humble production of my rustic Muse, now out of print and no spare copies.

I remain, yours very truly,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

H. S. SALT, ESQ.

P. S. There were ten letters to me published by Mr. S. I find in my package several more which I

would willingly put into your hands with other matter were you here. Still, your essay would hardly be improved therefrom.

38 Gloucester Rd., Regent's Park,
London, 22/12/89.

Dear Sir, — I am very much obliged to you for your kindness in sending me the extracts from the "Autumn Sheaf," from which I shall be glad to quote in my book on Thoreau. I will ask Mr. Cholmondeley to send me his copy of the volume, which I am sure will be full of interest to me.

I thank you also for your testimony to Thoreau's genius, which has especial value as coming from one who knew him so intimately.

The published letters to which you allude are, I presume, those printed at Boston, and edited by Emerson, in 1865. I have quoted passages from more than one of those addressed to you: for of course I recognized who Thoreau's correspondent was by the initials and context. If an opportunity should offer of having copies made of the few unpublished letters now in your possession, I need not say that I should be very grateful for them, though I think I now have sufficient material to rely upon if no more comes to hand. Colonel Wentworth Higginson has very kindly sent me copies of some letters he received from Thoreau, and there is the chance of finding those addressed to Thomas Cholmondeley.

I had intended to write to the poet Allingham,

when I was shocked to hear of his death, news of which has I suppose by this time reached you. Perhaps his widow may by and by be able to find the papers which you mentioned.

With many thanks for all the aid you have given me, and with best wishes of the season,

I remain,

Yours very truly,

H. S. Salt.

No. 38 Gloucester Road, Regent's Park,
London, Dec. 30, 1890.

Dear Mr. Ricketson, — I was very glad to learn from your letter of October 9 that you thought well of my book on Thoreau. It has been very widely noticed in the English press, and I trust it will be the means of exciting a greater interest in Thoreau's character and writings.

What you told me of your correspondence with William Howitt, and of the letters in your possession, interested me very much. I much wish I were competent to undertake the work which you suggest; but I am ashamed to say that I am almost unacquainted with William Howitt's writings, though I have read the biography recently published, or rather edited, by his daughter. If I should ever hear of any worthy person meditating a volume on Howitt, I will bear in mind the existence of these valuable letters.

I was touched by what you said respecting the loss of so many of your early friends — one of those

most pathetic experiences of life which affect us in thought even before they come to us in reality. But it must cheer you to remember that you numbered among your friends so noble and notable a personality as Thoreau, for to have known a man of genius is indeed a rare and inestimable privilege.

With myself, change of opinion, rather than death, has hitherto been the cause of friends falling away; but as I am now in my fortieth year I have come to a time when I am not likely to make many new friends, and can ill afford to lose old ones. I forget whether I told you in former letters that I was an assistant master at our great classical school, Eton College, for ten years, but gave up my position owing to the adoption of views (such as those of Thoreau) which brought me into antagonism with the conservative tone of an old-fashioned institution.

If, as I hope may be the case, you should some day feel disposed to write to me again, there is one point in Thoreau's history on which I should be very glad to receive enlightenment. I have been told by an American correspondent that in following Mr. Sanborn's account of Thoreau's parents, I have done an injustice to John Thoreau, the elder, and Cynthia Dunbar. Mr. Sanborn (and I think also Moncure Conway) represents John Thoreau as a somewhat dull, plodding person, and his wife as a lively gossip; but I am now assured that they were both persons of more than average sensibility and attainments, and possessed of a true love of nature

and natural life. It would be interesting and valuable to have your reminiscences as to this point.

With all good wishes for the new year, I remain,

Yours very truly,

H. S. Salt.

New Bedford, Mass., U. S. A.,
Jan. 19, 1891.

My dear Friend, — For I feel you are such — your welcome letter of the 30th ult. came duly to hand on the 10th inst. We are only eleven days apart, although over three thousand miles, and then, more wonderful still, within only a few hours by cable telegraph. We live truly in an age of wonderful scientific discovery.

I had been lately reading a very pleasant and well-written essay on Thomas Gray and his Friends, by D. C. Tovey of Trinity College, Cambridge, and as I sometimes do under like circumstances, wrote a letter of thanks to the author, in which I mentioned your life of Thoreau. I quote the following from his letter in reply to mine: —

"Your correspondent, H. S. Salt, is one of my greatest friends. I have not yet seen his Thoreau, though I have heard much of it. Salt is a very able writer, I think. He was a master at Eton with me for some years. Though I don't suppose our opinions very much harmonize, I find Salt and Mrs. Salt very lovable people, and very much in earnest."

I trust I have made no breach of confidence, as

the sentiments expressed are so friendly and appreciative, and such as should pass among Christian gentlemen and ladies.

I had addressed Mr. Tovey at Trinity College, from whence my letter was forwarded to him at his home, "Worpledon Rectory," Guilford, Surrey, in which he says, — "You will gather from my address, that I am a country parson."

The more I read of your Thoreau the more I am impressed with his rare excellence of character and the admirable manner you have set him forth to the British public. It seems remarkable to me, who knew him so intimately, that you should have been able to make so lifelike a portraiture of him. I do not know who your American correspondent may be that criticised Mr. Sanborn's representation of the good old couple, Mr. and Mrs. Thoreau. Mr. Sanborn was an inmate of their family for some length of time when a teacher in the Academy at Concord, and of course knew the parties well. You are aware that portraits of the same person by different artists are often very dissimilar, and yet good likenesses. Although the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Thoreau which you have copied from Mr. Sanborn are readily recognized, I should never have spoken of them in any manner that could have been construed into any disrespect for their genuine worth. Our philosopher was indebted undoubtedly to both his parents for much of his rare qualities — to the father for a calm, patient, industrious spirit, with great honesty of purpose and performance. He was a man rather to

be drawn out than to obtrude himself. He moved my respect for his genuine worth. On the other hand, Mrs. Thoreau was an unusually active, voluble person, rather tall, while her husband was short, a great talker, and strong delineator of character, but not unlike many other good housewives gifted in relating historical and domestic events. They lived harmoniously as husband and wife, and their children excelled in whatever is good and noble and therefore praiseworthy.

Had I your youth and high literary qualifications, I should feel strongly inclined to write the Life of William Howitt, one of England's truest sons, whose works stand high in America as well as at home. He had much of the character of the statesman, Hampden, and Sidney, etc., and would have graced the government of his country had he been called to parliament.

Your affectionate friend,

Dan'l Ricketson.

P. S. It will always give me pleasure to receive a letter from you.

New Bedford, Mass.,
April 21st, 1892.

Dear Mr. Salt, — I have by no means forgotten you and the generous as well as admirable work you have done for my dear friend Thoreau, as well as for the large and increasing circle of his admirers. I hope it has proved a pecuniary success — for most certainly the handsome manner in which the publish-

ers as well as yourself have given it to the great republic of letters deserves the most cordial reception.

However much I love my own native land, I think we have reason to be proud of our mother country, who in thoroughness of scholarship is still ahead of us, as most of our best educated people are aware. Our more variable climate, even than yours, and still more unsettled state of public matters, keep the great mass of our people so constantly in a state of excitement that a retired, studious, and reflective mind, whether man or woman, is an exception. It is the great advantage of an old country, whose institutions are settled, that genius and merit find a readier sphere of action. I know the greed for wealth is the bane of the best lands, but a new country in some ways suffers the most therefrom. We have a few political-economists among our public men, and our *high*, so-called *protective* tariff has already created monopolies of wealth and a spurious aristocracy. Time, however, will rectify all this, and our hopes are still in the ascendant for a better future.

Accept this hasty note as a token of friendship and affection from

Your obliged friend,

Dan'l Ricketson.

P. S. Please remember me, should it come in your way to do so, to Dr. Japp, with whom I had a pleasant correspondence a few years ago. He was then under affliction at the loss of his wife.

Old Elm Place,
New Bedford, Mass., U. S. A.,
June 3rd, 1895.

Dear Mr. Salt, — I have been much interested in reading your late work, "Animals' Rights," a copy of which I received soon after its publication last autumn. It is a grand contribution to the cause of humanity, as well as the higher culture of a pure and practical religion, such as the diviner portions of the Old and New Testaments inculcate, but which too often, and perhaps generally, have been supplanted by creeds and dogmas quite at variance with the great doctrine of "Peace on Earth and Good Will towards men."

At the advanced age of nearly eighty-two years, I still find myself constantly required to increase my faith in the Great Power that overrules all things, as creeds and dogmas lose their significance. This is an age of deep inquiry, and much that was deemed sacred has been relegated with the exploded doctrines of our forefathers. Among the good Friends (Quakers) from whom in an unbroken line I trace my descent back to the time of Fox and Penn, I can say in the words of my friend Ralph Waldo Emerson, "If I am anything, I am a Quaker." I still cling to their simple ways of worship, their honesty and truthfulness. I heard nothing of doctrines in my own father's family, but by precept and example was taught the higher principles of Christianity.

The religion seen so often in the works of our

truest New England poet, John Greenleaf Whittier, whom I also had as a friend and occasional correspondent, is that which I can most fully endorse, as the result of a long life of research and striving for the Truth.

I have lately also written a hasty letter to Rev. Duncan C. Tovey, who speaks of you in a letter I received from him Dec. 19, 1890, as "one of his greatest friends," also as a "Master at Eton with him some years." He styles himself a "country parson," and in my reply I mention, "holy Mr. Herbert," as old Isaac Walton called Reverend George Herbert, the sweet old poet-divine, William Gilpin, Prebendary of Salisbury, White of Selbourne (Rev. Gilbert), &c., &c., as confrères.

Well, I will draw this rambling note to a close, with my best wishes for your welfare and happiness.

Yours cordially and truly,

DAN'L RICKETSON.

H. S. SALT, ESQ.

X

LETTERS OF DANIEL RICKETSON AND SAMUEL A. JONES, M. D.

LETTERS OF DANIEL RICKETSON AND SAMUEL A. JONES, M. D.

ANN ARBOR, 10 March, 1890.

MY DEAR SIR, — I am deeply touched by your kind letter of the 8th inst. "Æt. 76 yrs. 7 mos."— *that* went to my heart. To write so long a letter at your age to an utter stranger shows your loving loyalty to Thoreau's memory. I had received an equally genial letter from Mr. Blake, and now, dear sir, my Thoreau collection is rich indeed. You and Mr. B. were his favorite correspondents, and your joint letters make me feel as if I had almost touched Thoreau's hand.

I have never had the pleasure of meeting you in the flesh, nor is it probable that I ever shall have. My life has not been given to making money. I have nine children and an aged father and mother dependent on me, and I just live and honestly pay my way. God gave me a love of books that has been to me more than wealth, and from the day that I began to *study* Thoreau I have been rich enough. That dear man's life and example has done for me far more than my dear old mother's Bible could do. I do not *comprehend* Thoreau, but I revere his memory and have learned from him the way of life. This is why I sent *you* a copy of my poor paper.

I had already sent one to Mr. Salt, and I will this day mail one to Dr. Japp — for whose address I am grateful indeed. My *pamphlet* (not the original paper) was "printed but not published," and as I have some copies (100) I will gladly mail one to any friend of Thoreau's whom you think would care for one; tho' I well know its only value is in the "Bibliography."

Both Lowell and Thoreau are judged by me from their written utterances. Lowell's genius and culture receive my unstinted admiration; but when it comes to *absolute sincerity* Lowell is to Thoreau as a "tallow dip" to an electric light. Lowell's nature is wholly inadequate to take in Thoreau. Lowell thought Thoreau was *posing* for effect. I am satisfied that Thoreau could not possibly *play* a part. I rank Christ Jesus, Socrates, and Thoreau as the sincerest souls that ever walked the earth. Alas! I have forgotten one — John Woolman, on whom God's peace sat as a garment. Just here please let me ask a question, namely: Thoreau is generally regarded as a sour, crabbed cynic. Now I never saw any photograph of Thoreau, and no steel engraving can give the eyes as a photograph does, yet I feel in my heart that, if one were absolutely an earnest and sincere man, *he* would find in Thoreau an infinite depth of tenderness. Not the demonstrative kind, but that which you *see* in the eyes and feel *warming* your own heart. Am I right? I do not want to burden your age with writing a letter, but a reply from you, if only a word,

will do my heart good, and I ask it from pure love for Thoreau.

I thank you for the "Standard." Lamb taught me to love John Woolman, and Woolman to love the Quakers. And now, dear sir, may the Source of All Good fill your eveningtide with peace ineffable.

Sincerely yours,

SAM'L A. JONES.

DAN'L A. RICKETSON, ESQ.

NEW BEDFORD, MASS., March 12, 1890.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Your warm-hearted letter of the 10th inst. has just come to hand, and been read with much interest and reciprocal feelings. The characteristics you name, I have heard applied to our dear philosopher, many years ago, but they have so long been buried in the high estimation and praise he has received at home and abroad, that I was almost surprised at the appearance of their ghost, which I thought had been effectually laid long ago. While Thoreau had no one of the characters mentioned, he was wisely careful not to have his friends expect too much intimacy, and it was my good fortune to receive more from him than he had given me reason to expect. There was a dignity in his composition that commanded respect, and a genuine benevolence and hospitality in his companionship that ever inspired confidence in his sincerity.

The best likeness of him was an ambrotype I had taken on his last visit to me in 1861, the year

before his death. There were two copies, one of which I sent to his sister Sophia soon after his decease, and the other is in the possession of my son Walton, who with his sister Anna, both unmarried, have resided together since their mother's death in 1877, mostly in Concord, Mass.

The fulness and tenderness of his (Thoreau's) eyes are largely wanting in the engraving made from it in Sanborn's Memoir. A number of his best and most characteristic letters of friendship to me have never been published — they were omitted by Emerson and Sanborn. These did far more justice to the true man than one or more of those they selected. I conclude such to be the case in those to Mr. Blake, of whom Thoreau always spoke in terms of much esteem. But the state of my health just now (as I am somewhat, as sailors say, "under the weather") reminds me that I must not enlarge further, although I have a great deal I could say were you at my side.

I remain,
Very truly yours,
DAN'L RICKETSON.

DR. S. A. JONES, M. D.

P. S. I think Mr. Salt will have some new and interesting matter in his "Study of Thoreau."

ANN ARBOR, 11th July, 1891.

MY DEAR SIR, — I sent you a copy of the "Inlander" solely for the purpose of giving so old a friend of Thoreau's the history of the 1862 edition

of his *Week*, and, behold, you have been kind enough to delight me with a friendly note.

I beg leave to say that, as a bibliographical fragment, the paper in the "Inlander" is based on absolute fact. When preparing a bibliography of Thoreau I was not aware of the existence of the "1862 edition," and having found a copy thereof, the problem was to account for it. I therefore visited Concord last August, and to solve this puzzle was a part of my purpose. As I am the first to record this bit of history I am as pleased with my performance as is the young mother with her first baby — "For pride attends us still."

The manner in which the fact is presented may make the paper appear as a clumsy figment; but I have only allowed fancy to dress up the fact. I did wish to contrast Carlyle's famous *Sartor* with Thoreau's first book, and to declare my conviction that the stormy Scotchman must sit at Thoreau's feet — *as a philosopher*. I also wished to have that particular book in our University Library tenderly preserved, and I am glad to inform you that, from a little regard for me as an effete ex-professor, that book can now be *seen*, but no rude hand can harm it. A common copy is provided for *use*.

When I was in Concord I ached to go to New Bedford and see you; but when I learned what strange creatures the School of Philosophy had erstwhile attracted thither, I feared I might be taken by you for one of the same, and I had not the courage to knock at your door. Of course, Mr. Ricketson,

such self-distrust is based on self-knowledge, and a consciousness of my own defects tends to make me shy in the presence of strangers. Nevertheless, I have many times repented that I did not call upon you; for your deepest scrutiny, while detecting my fallings-short, would have also found a sincere veneration for him whom it was your happiness to know. I am not worthy to even grease Thoreau's shoes — you know he would n't let me "black" them — but I am a truer man than I would have been had Thoreau never lived.

You refer to Mr. Salt's life of Thoreau and to me as a contributor. I did put my bibliography at his service, and have ever since been in correspondence with him — a love for Thoreau being "the tie that binds." Let me add that when Houghton, Mifflin & Co. published an enlarged bibliography in Mr. Blake's "Thoreau's Thoughts," I reserved the right to publish another bibliography whenever I saw fit. I did this because I desire to see a bibliography that will give as complete a history of each of Thoreau's books as is possible at this late day. To this end I shall need the aid, here and there, of those who knew Thoreau. Therefore I beg leave to apply to you when need arises.

I am also collecting first editions of Thoreau's works, and everything that I can find which in any way applies to him. It is already a large collection, and it will ultimately be deposited *en bloc* in some suitable place where they may, haply, fructify those who shall come to them after I am insensate dust.

From Mr. Salt's *Life* I learned for the first time of your *Autumn Sheaf*, and I am surprised that he did not include it in his bibliography. As I am collecting items of this nature for the larger edition of this bibliography, will you kindly copy the title-page of that volume, and state the pages therein in which Thoreau is mentioned? I know this is bold in me, but I ask it in his name.

In "Lippincott's Magazine" for the coming August I shall have a paper entitled *Thoreau in the Hands of his Biographers*, and if you would give me your plainest and most unsparing criticism you will help one who is most earnestly desirous of securing for Thoreau that audience which his life and work should have, but as yet does not.

I most sincerely trust that the spirit which urges me to write will also lead you to pardon so long a letter.

I am, dear sir,

Sincerely yours,

Sam'l A. Jones.

Daniel Ricketson, Esq.

New Bedford, Mass., July 15, 1891.

Resp'd Friend, — I received your kind letter of the 11th inst. in the same kind spirit, but I fear I shall hardly be able to answer your expectations in my response. I presume I am considerably older than you, as I was four years older than Thoreau, so that I shall reach my seventy-eighth year on the 30th of this month. Just now I am rather *poorly*,

having had an "ill turn" a few days ago, and added thereto I am afflicted with poison in my face and eyes, to which I have been subject for the past five or six years at this season whenever I go to visit my son and daughter at their summer resort, "Nonquit Beach," some six miles hence on the north shore of our beautiful Buzzard's Bay, so full of historic interest from the days of the Northmen in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, giving it the name of "Straumfiord" (stream currents), and the adjoining coast Vineland. Afterward, rediscovered by Bartholomew Gosnold in 1602, who gave the name of his queen to the Elizabeth Islands, that form its southern boundary. I crossed this bay with Thoreau in the summer of 1856, and landed on Naushon, the largest of the islands, and strolled with him along its shores and into the primitive woods, where the native deer are still found. Here we also heard the wood-thrush and other of our songbirds, much to our delight. Days sacred in memory, so great the changes to me in common with other mortals.

But to return to your letter, — in my remembrance of Thoreau I must repeat what I have so often written before to his biographers, that I must also caution you in its use.

I never felt that I was as near to him as some of his older friends whom he often mentioned to me in much respect, particularly Messrs. Blake and Brown, who were, I think, more *loyal* than I, who being quite free, often too much so, in my expressions,

differed occasionally from our more learned and exacting Seer. Still, I enjoyed and profited much in his companionship during the seven or eight years of his latter life. His strict honesty, veracity, justness, &c., &c., somewhat, perhaps, lessened the warmth of his friendship, which those of more ardent natures like myself desire, but are usually doomed to disappointment. Of course, Thoreau was by far the wiser and better man.

I should conclude that you and I were more alike than T. and ourselves, but that in an early friendship we should not have done so well together as with him.

My "Autumn Sheaf," to which you refer, was privately printed, and a very limited number, all of which were exhausted many years ago. I should be glad, had I a spare one, to send it to you. As you wish for references therein to T., I send the following, —

"The Improvised Dance," page 198.

"In Memoriam," 209.

These, I think, are noticed in brief by Sanborn and Salt.

I fear I have hardly responded to your warm-hearted letter, but must plead as excuse my present *collapsed* condition, as Thoreau's eccentric and poetic friend, Ellery Channing, might say.

Wishing you good success in your benevolent labors, I remain,

Yours very truly,

Dan'l Ricketson.

New Bedford, Mass., Aug. 12, 1891.

Dear Friend, — Your type letter of the 10th inst. has just come to hand, and I hasten to make more clear my statement relative to Thoreau and Lowell. It was in reference to an article which Thoreau had sent to the "Atlantic Monthly" magazine some two or three years before his death, and which Lowell, if my memory serves me rightly, as editor, took the liberty of criticising. My use of the word *critique* led you to suppose, and very justly, a subsequent production.

Our dear Thoreau stands now far beyond any reproach, and the unfair words said before or since his heroic life and death, are harmless ripples on the smooth surface of his fair name and fame.

My daughter, who now in winter resides in Concord, and knew Thoreau and his sister Sophia well, was much pleased with your article in "Lippincott," and took it with her to her seashore summer home, to read to her brother and other friends.

We all meet with our rebuffs, but "time makes all things even," and the great problem of our existence remains to be solved.

With abiding faith in Divine wisdom and goodness, I remain,

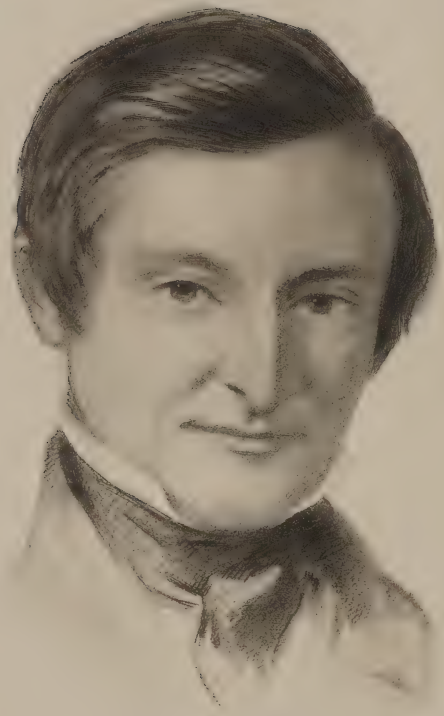
Yours very truly,

Dan'l Ricketson.

P. S. In a letter I have lately received from my friend Whittier, he says, "I am calmly waiting my call." He is in his eighty-fourth year.

XI

EXTRACTS FROM DANIEL RICKETSON'S JOURNAL



Daniel Ricketson, Æt. 37

Louisa Ricketson, Æt. 37

EXTRACTS FROM DANIEL RICKETSON'S JOURNAL

COWPER.

Whenever I stand before my little library or take from the shelf a volume, I feel that I am highly honored by the best of company, and I feel grateful to the great and good men who have thus kindly introduced themselves to me.

How often when warmly interested upon some inspired page have I been brought into communion with the noble nature that gave it! But among all my dearly treasured friends I find there none awaken in my mind such sweet, soothing, or instructive thoughts as my own dear Cowper.

From my boyhood to the present time my love and admiration for his character and genius has not only continued unabated, but has gradually and surely increased, and should it ever prove my beatific privilege to reach the hoped-for haven of bliss and rest among the saintly choir that are already there, after my own dear kindred I hope to behold and hold converse high — high indeed — with him I so much reverence and to whom I owe so much of my best and happiest hours.

July 30th, 1853.

It has been my impression that I should live to good old age, and now at forty I find myself in as good health so far as I can judge as at twenty, and as my desire is to lead a quiet and unostentatious life I hope to enjoy the remainder of my days in a wise and philosophical as well as truly religious manner.

I hope to live to see slavery, that sum of all wickedness, abolished from our land, the quarrels of nations settled by arbitration, and war to become obsolete, the factory system to become so ameliorated that the poor and suffering operatives of the present day shall be released from their thraldom, and the suffering poor of the old world, the little children here and there shut out from the beautiful influences of life and nature, set at liberty to enjoy fresh air and wholesome food; when the gallows shall be no longer seen, and the prisons and dungeons of the old world and our own become comparatively tenantless; when the domestic animals, particularly the horse, shall be far better treated, and the application of steam and other motive powers now so destructive of human life shall become by the increase of scientific knowledge and an increase of moral responsibility on the part of directors, officers, etc., far more safe and useful to mankind.

I desire to live to see this or a reasonable part of it. Happy day, when no sensitive mind shall say as I have often done in the language of the feeling bard, —

"Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumor of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war
Shall never reach me more."

(Cowper.)

1854.

August 10th. Bought a book this morning named Walden, or Life in the Woods, by Henry D. Thoreau, who spent several years upon the shore of Walden Pond near Concord, Mass., living in a rough board house of his own building. Much of his experience in his out-of-door and secluded life I fully understand and appreciate.

12th. Finished this morning reading Walden, or Life in the Woods, by H. D. Thoreau. I have been highly interested in this book, the most truly original one I ever read, unless the life of John Buncle, an old book written by an eccentric English gentleman. The experience of Thoreau and his reflections are like those of every true lover of Nature. His views of the artificial customs of civilized life are very correct. Mankind labor and suffer to supply themselves with the unnecessaries of life, — leisure for enjoyment is rarely obtained. I long for mankind to be emancipated from this thraldom which has spread its nets and snares over so large a portion of the human family. A love for a more simple life increases with me, and I hope that the time will ere long come when I may realize the peace to be derived therefrom. Simplicity in

all things, house, living, dress, address, &c., &c. My fortune, though not large, is ample, and were my style of living less expensive I might have considerable for charitable purposes. One of my greatest luxuries has been in books, — good books I value beyond most all else in the world of earthly treasure, after my family, — handsome editions of my favorite authors. Such I want in the best of paper, type, and binding and English, for my reading is confined pretty much to my native language. England, Scotland, or rather Great Britain and America, have furnished nearly all the authors I am acquainted with. Genuine English literature is my line of reading.

August 13th, 1854. Mailed a letter to Henry D. Thoreau expressive of my satisfaction in reading his book, "Walden, or Life in the Woods." His volume has been a source of great comfort to me in reading and will I think continue to be so, giving me cheerful views of life and feeling of confidence that misfortune cannot so far as property is concerned deprive me or mine of the necessaries of life, and even that we may be better in every respect for the changes.

Oct. 4th, 1854. Received a letter from Henry D. Thoreau to-day in reply to mine to him. Letter hastily written and hardly satisfactory, evidently well meant though overcautious.

Dec. 14th, 1854. Wrote an invitation to H. D. Thoreau of Concord, author of Walden, and sent a letter which I had had on hand some time.

LONG POND

Dec. 25th, 1854. H. D. Thoreau arrived this P. M., spent evening conversing upon various matters, the climate, &c., of England and America, &c.

Dec. 26th. A fine mild spring-like day. Walked through the woods to Tarkiln Hill and through Acushnet to Friends' Meeting House with Henry D. Thoreau, author of Walden. Rode this P. M. with H. D. T. round White's factory. Louisa and the children, except Walton, attended Lyceum this evening. Lecture by Mr. Thoreau. Subject, "Getting a Living." I remained at home, not feeling well enough to attend.

September, 1855.

29th Sept., Saturday. Clear fine day, growing gradually cooler. Henry D. Thoreau of Concord arrived about 1 1/2 o'clock.

30th, Sunday. Rather unsettled, but quite a fine day. Visited with Thoreau Sassaquin and Long Ponds, also "Joe's Rocks." Left about ten A. M. and returned at six P. M. in buggy wagon with old Charley, who performed his work with great spirit.

Oct. 2d, Tuesday, 1855. Cloudy and windy. Left home at 8 A. M. with H. D. Thoreau and visited several of the Middleboro Ponds, spending the most part of the day among them. Home at $6\frac{1}{2}$, dark cloudy evening. Spent an hour on the shore by Betty's Neck, so called; found the rock with the footmark upon it, though not as distinct as when I visited it in 1847, —

1749 (Footmark) Israel Felix.

Israel Felix was an old Indian preacher; the foot-print Thoreau supposed to be much older than the date or the name. The rocks around bore marks of other records, but so nearly obliterated as to be hardly distinguished. Saw five loons near the shore, also a half-blood Indian woman with her husband, a negro, starting in their boat to fish. Saw also the wife of my old friend John Rosier, who was drowned in the pond several years ago. John was a half-blood Indian, being part negro. He lived in a little cabin half in a hill, with a roof over it. There are but two of the old stock remaining, one by the name of Lydia Squinn, who now lives in New Bedford, and another, a female by the name of Simonds, who lives now on Sconticut Neck. We also stopped at the old Indian burying-place near the road by Quittacus Pond.

Oct. 4th, Thursday. Clear and fine most of the day; shower latter part afternoon. Rode to Westport with Thoreau and examined the old Proprietor's Records of the old township of Dartmouth for the names of my ancestors.

Returning stopped upon the shore of Westport Pond in a grove of young oaks, where ourselves and old Charley ate our dinner, arriving home about 4½ P. M. Showery evening.

5th, Friday. Clear and fine, warm for the season. Left home this morning at 8 o'clock with Henry D. Thoreau, who has been on a visit with us at Brooklawn during the past week, for Plymouth; went by the way of Middleborough, crossing by Long Pond

into Carver; took our dinner on the way, under some pines by the wayside, where we also baited our horse, "Billy," upon oats. Took tea at the house of B. M. Watson, a friend of Thoreau, who has a nursery near Plymouth, a very pleasant place, and nice people,—Mr. and Mrs. W. and the mother of Mr. W. and three young children. Rode into Plymouth after tea, and stopped for the night at Olyn's on Leyden Street.

6th, Sat. Unsettled, rain in evening. Left Plymouth at $11\frac{1}{2}$ A. M., and arrived home much fatigued about 5 P. M. My friend, H. D. Thoreau, left for Boston and home.

7th, Sunday, Oct., 1855. Last Sunday my friend Thoreau and I spent most of the day visiting Sassaquin and Long Pond, "Joe's Rocks." I enjoyed the visit of Thoreau very much; he improves, unlike most people, upon an intimate acquaintance — modest and gentle in his manner, the best read and most intelligent man I ever knew. He is also a very good naturalist, and very much interested while here in wild plants, shells, &c. He took away with him quite a little collection of curiosities he had collected during our rambles. In Indian history I found him well informed, and as a classical scholar but few, I should judge, could compete with him. My respect for his character and talents is greater than for any man I know.

March, 1856.

6th, Thursday. At home in the Shanty this forenoon, reading and making extracts from an arti-

cle on Indian Epic Poetry in the "Westminster Review."

Wrote the following this forenoon: —

ORPHICS BY A MODERN.

In proportion as we see the merits of others we add to our own.

Mind is ever in the spring, — one eternal May morning, the same in its original freshness, whether in the Sanscrit as a medium, the Greek and other languages, or the English.

Mind has an eternal youth. "Haunted forever by the eternal mind" is a fine thought of Wordsworth, himself a philosopher and priest of Nature. Man must ever find this to be true — the thoughtful man.

BOOKS. — CHANNING.

"God be thanked for books. They are the voices of the distant and the dead, and make us heirs of the spiritual life of past ages. Books are the true levellers. They give to all who will faithfully use them the society, the spiritual presence of the best and greatest of our race. No matter how poor I am. No matter though the prosperous of my own time will not enter my obscure dwelling. If the sacred writers will enter and take up their abode under my roof, if Milton will cross my threshold to sing to me of Paradise, and Shakespeare to open to me the worlds of imagination and the workings of the human heart, and Franklin to enrich me with his practical wisdom, I shall not pine for the want of

intellectual companionship, and I may become a cultivated man though excluded from what is called the best society in the place where I live."

D. R.'s JOURNAL, June 10th, 1856.

1856.

June 17th, 1856. Left Newport this morning at five o'clock for Concord, Mass., *via* Providence and Boston, and arrived at C. about 12 M. The sail up the Providence or Blackstone River was very fine, the morning being clear and the air very refreshing. My object in coming to Concord was to see H. D. Thoreau, but unfortunately I found him on a visit at Worcester, but I was received with great kindness and cordiality by his father and mother, and took tea with them. Mrs. Thoreau, like a true mother, idolizes her son, and gave me a long and interesting account of his character. Mr. Thoreau, a very short old gentleman, is a pleasant person. We took a short walk together after tea, returned to the Middlesex Hotel at ten. Mrs. T. gave me a long and particular account of W. E. Channing, who spent so many years here.

June 19th, 1856. Walked after breakfast with Mr. Thoreau, Senr., by appointment to the cemetery and over the ridge to see Mr. Hosmer, an intelligent farmer. Purchased the life of Mary Ware, and a framed portrait of Charles Sumner, the former for Mrs. Thoreau, and the latter for her daughter Sophia.

H. D. Thoreau and his sister S. arrived home this noon from a visit to Worcester. Passed a part of

the afternoon on the river with H. D. T. in his little boat, — discussed Channing part of the time. Took tea and spent the evening at Mr. T.'s. (Item) H. D. T. says buy "Margaret."

Concord, June 20th, 1856, 6 P. M. Just returned from a sail on the river with Thoreau, having been all day. Bathed twice, visited the Baker farm and the Conantum farmhouse. Just going out to tea with the Thoreaus to Mrs. Brooks's, an abolitionist. Took tea at Mrs. Brooks's. I was pleased with her downright principles on the subject of slavery. Her husband appeared pleasant and agreeable, but not particularly engaged in the anti-slavery enterprise. Home at ten; retire about eleven. Mr. Thoreau, Senr., although ordinarily a quiet man, is very intelligent, and a fine specimen of the gentleman of the old school. I am strongly impressed with his sterling merits — a character of honesty illumines his countenance. Few men have impressed me so favorably.

21 June, 1856. Saturday. Exceedingly warm at Concord. Thermometer at 93 in the shade north side Mr. Thoreau's house, 12 M., rose to 97; spent the forenoon with Mr. Thoreau, Senr., walked down by the river and sat under the shade of the willows by the bank. I had a pleasant conversation with Miss Thoreau this P. M.; walked to Walden Pond with H. D. T. this P. M.; bathed, and crossed the pond with him in a boat we found upon the shore. Saw the Scarlet Tanager by the aid of Thoreau's glass, a bird I had never seen before. He was

perched upon the topmost bough of a pine, and chanted forth his simple song with considerable earnestness for some time. R. W. Emerson called upon me this evening; talked of Channing and the Kansas affairs. Walked home with him and with Thoreau. This has been extremely warm, thermometer at 99 at 5 P. M. north side shade of Mr. T.'s house.

Concord, Mass., Sunday, June 22d, 1856. My ideas of Mr. Emerson, with whom I had my second interview last night, are that he is a kind, gentle-natured man, even loving, but not what is usually termed warm-hearted. His mind does not strike me as being so great and strong as good in quality; it appears to me also limited as to its power. I should think he could rarely surprise one with any outburst of inspiration — his genius, for that he undoubtedly has, is *sui generis*. He is thoughtful, original, and only Emerson, and the founder of his race. It does not appear to me that he is even indebted to Carlyle, although the latter has recognized him as a kindred spirit. Emerson's strength appears to me to lie in his honesty with himself; by his honesty he has produced a genuine article in the way of thought. He is an intelligent philosopher, a recipient of the divine cordial in doses rather homœopathic, but effectual specifics for those seeking a purer and better draught than what the schools afford. He is a blessing to the age. I am much interested in Concord, and should prefer it for a residence to almost any other place. The scenery is very picturesque in and about the village, and all

appears quiet and peaceful, none of the stir and bustle of New Bedford. The Concord, or Musketaquid or grass-grown river, as my friend H. D. T. has learned its meaning from the Indians, runs along the edge of the village, which is chiefly on one street, although there are several others. It is a fine stream, and remarkable for its gentle current. With Thoreau I rowed up the river several miles, and had many pleasant views from different points. Walden Pond, by the shore where Thoreau built him a little house and there lived two years, is a small but delightful little lake, surrounded by woods. It is very deep and clear, a kind of well of nature. Concord has been for a long time the home or place of temporary abode for many of our most intellectual men and women, — commencing, so far as I am informed, with Dr. Ripley, then Emerson, Margaret Fuller for a short time as a visitor, Hawthorne, G. W. Curtis, H. D. Thoreau, the true Concord aborigine, William E. Channing, 2d, poet, Hon. Samuel Hoar, and his son, ex-Judge Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar. It is also the home of Mrs. Brooks, a true and stirring abolitionist. Concord has a large number of fine old houses, and the old parsonage, once the home of Dr. Ripley and near the battle-ground, is one of the finest old homes in this county.

June 22d, 1856. A very warm day. Thermometer at 95, 3 P. M. Spent the forenoon in H. D. T.'s room, copying titles of books, &c. — called by invitation at R. W. Emerson's at 4 P. M. with Thoreau — on the way called on Mrs. Brooks, the abolitionist.

Walked to Walden Pond with Emerson and his children, and Thoreau; took tea at E.'s. Thoreau returned with Ellen and Edith E. while Mr. E., his son Eddy, 12 years of age, and myself, stopped and bathed in Walden Pond. Our conversation was principally upon birds and flowers that we met upon the way. Met Mrs. Ripley, Mrs. Goodwin, Miss Ripley and Dr. C. Francis at Mr. E.'s on our return. Returned at 9 with T. to his father's and to bed at ten. My visit to E.'s was very satisfactory.

June 23d, 1856. — Monday. Left Concord this A. M. with Henry D. Thoreau at $8\frac{1}{2}$ o'clock, and arrived home at $1\frac{1}{2}$ P. M., stopping one hour in Boston, visiting the Natural History rooms with H. D. T. who is a member of the Society. Thermometer at 73 — P. M. R. W. Emerson's version of the wood-thrush as repeated to me Sunday P. M. June 22d, on our walk to Walden pond: He Willy Willy, Ha Willy, Willy O, Willy O.

My visit to Concord from which I have just returned will long be remembered with pleasure. There I met several cultured and congenial people and particularly enjoyed my walks, rambles and boat excursions with my friend Thoreau.

June 24th, 1856. Clear and fine, wind W. — Thermometer at 48 at 5 A. M. Rose early and found Thoreau walking in the garden — assisted him in fitting a press for his plants. Left home about 10 with H. D. T. for Long Pond — on the way spent an hour at Sassaquin or Tobey's pond, dined under an apple-tree near a spring on the Brady

farm, after which bathed upon the south shore of Long Pond, and visited Nelson's Island, one of the most beautiful and retired spots in this part of the county, made a sketch of the back side of the Brady house, and the barn, in Thoreau's note-book. Home at 7; went with Billy and the old buggy wagon.

25th Wednesday. Cooler, unsettled, and signs of rain, wind S. W. At home and about this forenoon, Thoreau busy collecting marine plants from the river side. Went to town this P. M. with Thoreau. Called at Thomas A. Greene's with T. who wished to confer with him about rare plants and those peculiar to this section — afterwards went to the city library and examined Audubon's Ornithology for a species of the sparrow which we have on our place and which as yet I have been unable to identify with any described in Wilson or Nuttall.

26th, Thursday. Cloudy morning and light rain. Cleared off by noon very fine and warm. Made an excursion to the end of Sconticut Neck with my friend Thoreau, in search of marine plants, &c. On our return called to see an old Indian woman by the name of Martha Simonds living alone in a little dwelling of but one room. It was very interesting to see her, as she is not only a pure blooded Indian, but the last of her tribe, probably the Nemaskets. Her complexion was tawny, and her straight black hair was mixed with gray; we undoubtedly saw a genuine Indian woman. Arrived home from our excursion to Sconticut about 5.

27th, Friday. Clear and warm, some rain and

sharp lightning last night. Spent forenoon in the Shanty with Thoreau, engaged in ornithology principally and the philosophy of life generally. Went to Naushon Island in the afternoon in the steamer "Eagle's Wing" and returned at 6½ in company with our friend H. D. Thoreau, Arthur, and Walton.

[We quote the following from the History of New Bedford descriptive of this visit. — EDITORS.]

"On the afternoon of the 27th of June, 1856, in company with a congenial friend, I visited this island. Leaving New Bedford, in less than two hours our gallant steamer, the Eagle's Wing, landed us at Hadley's harbor, upon the east end of the island. Our object being to see the natural beauties and productions of this comparatively unmolested realm of nature, we at once proceeded into the ancient woods, where we were soon amply rewarded by a sight of some of the noblest trees and forest ranges we had ever seen. The beeches, oaks, and other trees here grow to a large size, many of them undoubtedly of great age. Soon after our entrance we were greeted by the sight of a beautiful fawn, that stood gazing at us from a thicket at a short distance, but quickly bounded away from our view. The island being private property, the native deer are still preserved; but at certain seasons, we regret to say, these beautiful and noble creatures are hunted and shot. Naushon is the largest of the Elizabeth Islands, and is about seven miles in length and a

mile and a quarter in breadth. It was formerly the property of the Hon. James Bowdoin, a Governor of Massachusetts, by whom it was bequeathed to his nephew, James Bowdoin, and by him bequeathed to his nephew, James Temple Bowdoin, who resided in London. It is now the property, by purchase, of William W. Swain, of New Bedford, and John M. Forbes, of Milton. The old mansion-house upon this island, which has been for many years the summer residence of the elder proprietor, Mr. Swain, was built by said James Bowdoin, an old bachelor, who died there while seated in his chair. The house was closed for many years, and had the reputation of being haunted, and was occasionally visited from this cause by the curious.

"To the natives, this island, as well as the rest of the group, was a favorite resort, both on account of the refreshing ocean breezes of summer and the tempered air of winter, besides affording them the necessaries of life in abundance. To the naturalist, this island affords much attraction. The trees, plants, &c., grow in unusual luxuriance; and we saw a grapevine, which my companion thought might have dated back to the time of Gosnold, that measured twenty-three inches in circumference six feet from the ground, firmly interlaced with a sturdy beech, each apparently striving for the mastery.

"The fine old woods were vocal with the songs of birds, and it was singularly pleasing to hear, on this ocean isle, the familiar notes of the wood-thrush, the veery (Wilson's thrush), the yellow-throat, wood-

pewee, &c. So with the plants and flowers which greeted our way. A more genial and heart-moving welcome we could not have desired than was thus afforded us by the bountiful hand of nature.

"A melancholy interest is attached to this island in the minds of the readers of the beautiful and instructive narrative of the heroic life, sufferings, and death of Robert Swain, a talented and accomplished young man, the only son of Mr. Swain, who lies buried in a pleasant and retired spot chosen by himself. Here his exhausted body found its last rest; but the beautiful and noble spirit that invested it dwells in the genial atmosphere of kindred natures.

"Sacred the spot where virtue lies!
Though we may see his form no more,
In vain we say the good man dies;
He lives more truly than before.

"Passing out of the woods, we stopped upon a rising ground to view the hospitable mansion of Mr. Swain, which stands upon an elevated spot at the northeast part of the island, commanding a fine view of the broad landscape around, the bay, and the adjoining main. This house, the same before spoken of, is a large old-fashioned mansion, fronting the north, hip-roofed, with several tall chimneys, which with its ample piazzas presents an imposing and agreeable appearance. During the past year (1857) this house has been enlarged by the addition of a wing upon each side, and in other respects materially improved by the proprietors. Mr. Swain is familiarly

known as 'the governor,' but truly he belongs to a more gallant and noble class, the ancient Lords of the Isles; and thus regarding him, we were reminded of the hospitable chieftains visited by Doctor Johnson and his friend Boswell during their tour among the Hebrides.

"Buzzard's Bay lies between north latitude 41° 25′ and 41° 42′, and between 70° 38′ and 71° 10′ west longitude from Greenwich; from its entrance between Saughkonnet Point and the ledge of rocks that makes off from the west end of Cuttyhunk, known as the 'Sow and Pigs,' it stretches away northeast-by-north for thirty miles, with an average breadth of seven miles, laving the southern shore of old Dartmouth, beautifully indented by those fine rivers, the Acoaxet, the Pascamanset, and the Acushnet; with Dumpling Rock and the Round Hills on the north, while on the south lies the beautiful and noble group of the Elizabeth Islands. Pleasant must it be to our seafaring brethren, after a long voyage into distant oceans, once more to behold the familiar objects herein described. With a fine ocean breeze, the canvas all spread, the signal flying at mast-head, and richly freighted, each moment bringing them nearer to those so near and dear, until the anchor drops in our harbor, every object that meets the eye must extend a welcome."

June 28th, Saturday. Clear and fine. Thoreau and Arthur went up the river botanizing.

29th, Sunday. Very warm, wind S. W. fresh.

Thermometer at 87 during the middle of the day. Walked this P. M. with Thoreau down as far as the Indian burial hill on Coggeshall farm, and after tea rode with him round Tarkiln Hill and home by Nash Road; talked widely, and retired at 10.

30th, Monday. Warm and clear. Rode to the Middleboro' Ponds with Thoreau. Visited Haskell's Island, so-called, in Great Quitticus Pond, from where we bathed and ate our dinner upon the west shore of the Island, then rode to Assawampsett and visited the old meeting-house now fast falling to decay and abuse, and King Philip's look-out, so called.

July 1st, Friday. A fine day, cooler than for some days. Thermometer at 75, 12 hours, noon: wind N.W. This I attribute to the heat lightning in the east last evening. Rode to town this morning with Thoreau, visited Arnold's garden with him. Channing came up to tea to see Thoreau and spend the evening and night. Thoreau and Channing spent the evening in the Shanty. Retired at 10.

2d, Saturday. Clear and fine, cool this morning. Thermometer at about 50, 5 A. M. My friend H. D. Thoreau left in the early train this morning for his home at Concord, Mass. Took him to the Tarkiln Hill station. Channing, who spent the night with us, left about 9 to walk to town. During the visit of my friend Thoreau we have visited the Middleborough Ponds twice, the Island Naushon, Sconticut Neck, etc. His visit has been a very pleasant one to myself and family. He is the best educated man I know, and I value his friend-

ship very much. His health is quite poor at present, and I fear he will hardly reach old age, which from his unconcern in regard to it the more strengthens my fears for his loss.

While seated this forenoon in the Shanty, uncomfortable with my swollen face, I ran off the following lines: —

I have no appetite, says Tom,
I 've naught to eat, says Jack, —
The moths devour Tom's surplus coats,
John has none to his back.

Here, eat my dinner, honest soul,
And clothe thy naked back;
Down goes the beef and puddings quick,
And warmly clad is Jack.

By fasting Tom is soon improved,
By feeding so is Jack;
Room in his wardrobe now has Tom,
And John a good warm back.

Sept. 3d, 1856.

Sept. 20th, Thursday. Left home this P. M. in 3.40 train for Boston and Concord, Mass., where I arrived about 7½ P. M. On my arrival at Concord sent a lad for H. D. Thoreau who I went to visit; he soon came; went to his father's house; called on Wm. E. Channing and then to the hotel.

21st, Friday. Poor sleep at hotel. Thoreau called at 8. Walked with him to Walden Pond and saw the location of the Shanty where he lived

alone some two years, bathed and visited the cliff and several other hills to obtain views of the pond and surrounding country, which is very picturesque, the Concord River constantly seen in its meandering course through the neighboring fields, &c. Dined with Thoreau at his father's house; after dinner went on the river with Thoreau and Channing; called at an old farmhouse and saw a Mr. Hosmer, a friend of my companions; visited old battle-ground; saw the old mansion where Hawthorne formerly lived. Took tea with R. W. Emerson, in whose family Thoreau is quite at home, having been an inmate there. Suffered from embarrassment or rather a sense of incongruity in my being at Emerson's. I spent the night with Channing, who kindly made a good bed for me, the one at the hotel being so poor.

22d, Saturday. Rose with headache, breakfast with Channing who lives alone, having separated from his wife and children for what reason I do not know, but he appears to me to be a kind and quiet man with extreme eccentricity. Thoreau came in, we spent the forenoon in conversation; among other matters Channing suggested the plan of an independent periodical, &c. Left at 1 P. M. and arrived at Tarkiln Hill about 7 P. M. The visit, except excessive fatigue and headache, was very pleasant and will be long remembered by me. My respect for Thoreau was much increased, he is not only a man of great natural powers, but of extreme acquirements and very much of a gentleman.

Dec. 22d, 1856. Rode to the Tarkiln Hill station at noon in expectation somewhat of seeing Mr. R. W. Emerson, but he did not come. At the depot in town while awaiting the arrival of the P. M. train from Boston, had an adventure with a coachman who abused his horse. Rather successful on my part. Mr. Emerson arrived, took him to brother Joseph's to tea, heard his lecture before the Lyceum. He came out with me and spent the night. His lecture without a name very good.

23d, Tuesday. Spent an hour in the Shanty with Mr. Emerson and accompanied him to Boston in the mid-day train; he introduced me to the Athenæum; called at the Anti-Slavery Fair in Winter St.

Met Mr. E. by agreement and went to Concord with him and passed the night. Found an agreeable and hospitable companion, Mr. Sanborn, the teacher, and a Mr. Abbott, sophomore of Cambridge. Called at Mr. Emerson's in the evening.

24th, Wednesday. Breakfasted with Mr. Emerson and his daughters Ellen and Edith, and his son Edward, fine young people. Left Mr. E.'s and walked with Thoreau in the P. M. to Walden Pond, and through the woods to "Baker Farm," immortalized by Thoreau and Channing in prose and verse. The walking hard on account of snow about eight inches deep; got back at ten. Spent evening in house. T. read Channing's poem on Baker Farm and some other of C.'s pieces which he thinks better than almost any other poet. Thoreau saw a fox cross

before us and there were numerous traces across the road in the woods. Enjoyed the walk though quite tired out.

1857.

January. Another year added to my experience of life, marked by a few changes in my intellectual life. I find myself becoming more philosophical (a very indefinite term I am aware), and less actual (another vague term), but nearer to what I mean than any other terms I can find.

During the past year my intercourse with Channing, Thoreau, and Emerson has had a considerable effect in modifying my views of life, but in a great measure has harmonized with my former experiences, which in a good degree have prepared me for them. I find myself rather calmer in my views of duty, and trust less to active measures than formerly. During the past year I have written more than usual, — a few pieces of verse, two articles on the Middleborough Ponds, and fourteen articles on the History of New Bedford, all requiring considerable research and intellectual labor. I hope the practice in composition will prepare me for writing something that may be useful to my fellow-men, particularly those rising in life, the young and ardent, who need the cheering voice of one who has passed the threshold of manhood and has already felt the intimations of old age, one who has suffered from the impositions of society, wrong-headed as it usually is. Many a youthful genius is undoubtedly crushed by the rolling weight of popular opinion — to these

I would speak a word of encouragement, having learned from experience how much of a bugbear this world and its inhabitants are. I mean, of course, the conventionalities of society, so called.

April 1st, 1857. Spent the day at home with Mr. Alcott; I find him a genial, highly gifted man. H. D. Thoreau arrived to-night from Concord; met him at Tarkiln Hill.

April 3d. Spent the day at home, in the Shanty during the forenoon with Mr. Alcott and Thoreau; talked on high themes, rather religious. Alcott walked to town this P. M. Thoreau and I walked as far as Woodlee with him, parted, and we crossed to the railroad and so up to Tarkiln Hill, and through the woods thence home. Channing and Alcott walked up from town together to tea.

8th, Wednesday. Clear and fine, spent at home. Mr. Alcott dined at B. Rodman's. Thoreau made some bayberry tallow in the Shanty; walked with him to the rocky cliff beyond Acushnet. Channing came up this P. M. Fair, clear, moonlight evening.

9th, Thursday. Unsettled. In town with Thoreau. Walton and Thoreau walked round the beach and the west side of Clark's Cove.

Mr. Alcott's first conversation at Mrs. Arnold's this evening; attended with the children, Mr. A. riding with us. Subject, "Descent." A successful opening.

13th, Monday. Rode to Quittacus Pond with Thoreau, also visited Long Pond, and took our dinner at the old Brady house. Channing came up

to tea. Attended the third Conversation of Mr. Alcott at C. W. Morgan's this evening, the subject, "Diet and Health." Owing to some supposed disrespect to Christianity and the customs of Quakers, some of the members of the society left, although I think from what I know of Mr. Alcott if they had remained through his course they would have been better satisfied.

14th, Tuesday. Raining, wind N. E. At home. In the Shanty and house conversing on high themes with Mr. Alcott and Thoreau. Walked as far as the blacksmith's shop (Terry's) just at night. Talk after tea on races, &c. Dull for want of sleep.

April 15th, Wednesday. H. D. Thoreau and myself left home at 6 A. M. for Tarkiln Hill, but the cars not stopping long enough for him to get on board, he was left and returned home with me. Rode to the depot with him at $10\frac{1}{2}$ A. M.

April 17th. Attended Mr. Alcott's fifth and last conversation at C. W. M.'s; subject, "Victories," an animated discussion, in which I participated to my regret. I must retire more and more into my old habits of solitude; much society I cannot bear. Retired at $12\frac{1}{2}$ exhausted and nervous.

18th, Saturday. My friend A. Bronson Alcott, who came the 31st of March, left this morning after breakfast for Boston. Mr. A. is the best representative, probably, of modern days of one of the old philosophers, and is sometimes called "Plato," or the modern Plato. From the acquaintance I have had with him I am ready to award to him the noblest

character of any man I have ever met. Such men are indeed rare in any age.

I am now left to my old habits, and feel more than ever the necessity of living in retirement.

April 22, 1857. I miss my friend Channing, who usually came up on Wednesday afternoons. Read in his poems to-day the lines entitled "To My Companions;" very touching, and really a deep-wrought experience of life rendered into verse. I should like to write a review of Channing's poems which might bring them more familiarly before the public. He has written some of the best poetry of any American, and will, sooner or later, be recognized as one of our best as well as most original poets. His lines possess much tenderness and beauty. He is really the poet of the heart. The world is too hard for such men, and he suffers greatly therefrom. From an intimate acquaintance of nearly a year and a half, which is now, alas! terminated, I look back with much interest and feel quite indebted to him for many interesting experiences.

23d. I begin to feel the loss of Channing's company, who, though a very capricious acquaintance, still possessed many tastes in common with my own. I have rarely if ever found a more companionable friend.

May 23d, Saturday. Left home at 10 A. M. for Concord, arriving there at $5\frac{1}{2}$ P. M. Walked with Thoreau this evening, and called at Mr. Emerson's. Slept at Channing's house upon an iron bedstead. Fine warm starlight eve.

24th. Sunday fine and warm — wind light. Thermometer at 86 above zero north side Mr. Thoreau's house at 2 P. M. Rowed upon the river with Thoreau this forenoon. Walked up Lee's Hill and visited the old Lee farm, the house having been lately burned. The barn and hen-houses are very complete affairs. Dined at Mr. Thoreau's; spent part of the P. M. in my room at Channing's house talking with Thoreau upon various topics. Took a long walk this P. M., leaving at four and returning at seven to the cliff with Mr. and Mrs. Emerson, their two daughters, Ellen and Edith, son Edward, and my friend Thoreau; had tea and spent the remainder of the evening with the Emersons. Much pleased with Mrs. E.'s fine sense and sensibility as well as humanity, topics relative to which were the principal part of my conversation with her on the walk this P. M.

Concord, 25th, Monday. Fine and warm summer weather. Walked through the village, over the river, north to the hills, and returned by the Battle-ground and the old Parsonage House. On the river with Thoreau in his boat this P. M. The excursion upon the Concord River this P. M. with Thoreau in his boat was very pleasant, although when we started I hardly felt able to walk to the boat, which was upon the shore, some distance up the river, near Fairhaven Bay. But after a bath and swim with T. I felt much refreshed and my dull headache passed gradually off. Walked alone after tea as far as the old red-painted house beyond the railroad

crossing west. Halted on my return at the railroad depot, and was much interested in an ingenious young fellow who was earning his livelihood selling humming-tops, of whom I purchased one for Joseph's little boy Frank. Thoreau accompanied me to my room, and after a long talk upon character, &c., I retired at 10.

26th, Tuesday. Left Concord at 7½ A. M. Had a long conversation with Miss Ellen Emerson, eldest daughter of R. W. Emerson, who attends the school of Professor Agassiz at Cambridge. She is a very sensible, open-hearted, intelligent young lady, but quite peculiar and original in her ideas upon many subjects; modest of her own qualities, but evidently a strongly marked person, one that will grow in strength and finally make a noble woman. I was on the whole quite interested and pleased with her.

In Boston called about noon at Dr. Walter Channing's, in Bowdoin St.; there saw beside the doctor the two eldest children of my friend Wm. Ellery Channing, Margaret Fuller C. and Caroline Sturgis C., daughters worthy of a poet and of whom any father might be proud: sweet sensitive girls, Margaret not 13 and Caroline about 10. How tenderly I regarded them, deprived of their lovely mother and so neglected by their talented and wayward father! Dined with Arthur B. Fuller, the brother, and Mrs. Fuller, the mother of the revered and lamented Margaret and Ellen — Madam Ossoli and Mrs. William E. Channing. After a long

and instructive as well as interesting conversation, the latter part with Mrs. Fuller, I left, deeply impressed with their genuine goodness and beauty of character, about 5 P. M. In the dining-room were three engravings (saved from the wreck) of Madam Ossoli's, to wit: "Tasso's Oak," "Pine in the Colonna Gardens, Rome," Michael Angelo's "Cypresses, Rome;" also a scene in Rome, with her residence there. In Mr. Fuller's own room upstairs were several line engravings from paintings by Zampieri. In the front parlor was a raised plaster head of Margaret, and the engraving underneath the same, placed in the memoirs of her by her brother, very much like the original daguerreotype of Miss Ellen Channing with a child in her arms — a sweet motherly face, truly lovely; also a fine portrait of the deceased wife of Mr. Fuller, a sweet open face. In the dining-room was a portrait of the Hon. Timothy Fuller, the father of Margaret — reddish hair, blue eyes, and rather mild countenance — the portrait resembling in style that of Fisher Ames. Mr. F. presented me with several manuscript pieces of Margaret's, and Mrs. Fuller with a volume of poems by J. W. Randall, a friend of hers.

December 18th. Took tea with Thoreau and spent the evening with him and his father's family. Parker Pillsbury, the anti-slavery lecturer, there. Took Channing's room for lodging, hard bed, poor sleep. Cleared this P. M.

19th, Saturday. Clear and colder; accompanied

Thoreau on a survey of woodland near Walden Pond this forenoon, dined with him at his father's, afternoon at my lodgings with Thoreau and Parker Pillsbury. R. W. Emerson also joined us at the close of the P. M. Took tea with Mr. Emerson, called on Mrs. Alcott and her daughters, whom I found very agreeable and intelligent people; one daughter I did not see, being quite ill, probably not to recover. Mr. Sanborn called there, with whom I returned to my room, he occupying with a sister Channing's house.

20th, Sunday. Clear and cool, walked this forenoon with Thoreau to the high land northeast of the village about three miles; ate our dinner of brown bread and cheese on the lee side of a stone wall. Took tea with Mr. Emerson and spent the evening alone with him by his parlor wood fire. Left at $9\frac{1}{2}$. Called on Thoreau at his room on my return, to bed at $11\frac{1}{2}$. My conversation with Mr. Emerson upon Oriental literature.

REMARKS.

This short absence has been crowded with interesting events and experiences to me. The short stay at my friend Arthur B. Fuller's, where I only dined, was very agreeable from the cordiality of Mrs. Fuller, the mother of the celebrated M. F. Ossoli. I was introduced to Richard H. Fuller, Esq., of the legal profession, but also a farmer, or rather the owner of a farm at Wayland, some twenty miles north of Boston. He as well as the

rest of the family are very devout and intelligent people.

The interviews and conversations I had with my friends Emerson and Thoreau were marked by agreeable and intellectual experiences, and will long be remembered in my rather dull and unintellectual life.

1857.

Dec. 22d. In the Shanty most of the day. Walked down to the railroad crossing this P. M. with Ranger, — thinking of the lapse of time and how imperceptibly, almost, my youth had slipped away. My thoughts ran somewhat in this strain: Solemn indeed is the march of time, quietly stealing along his sure and resistless way. In childhood and youth we heed him not, the wealth of years seems before us, and we gladly count the lustrums as they pass. Like the full bucket rising so buoyantly until it leaves the water's edge, so rise our early years upon us. Soon, alas! like the bucket, we ourselves, filled with years, are ready as it were to sink back into the abyss of time, never more to rise again.

August 20th, 1858.

As I am just publishing my history of New Bedford, I make the subjoined description of myself, now in the 46th year of my age, taking the hint for so doing from the "Spectator."

"A reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure till he knows whether the writer of it be a black or a fair man, of a mild or choleric disposition, married

or a bachelor, with other particulars of a like nature, that conduce very much to the right understanding of an author" (Addison).

Having stated my age, I would add that I am, or rather was in my youth, fair — in other words of a sandy complexion, my hair somewhat of a darker shade now and a little on the brown, a good crop of it still upon my head; my beard, which I wear at present full, rather light and coarse, and of a reddish brown color — my skin where not exposed to the sun of a clear white but not delicate, but little hair upon my body and none upon my breast — my limbs stout and well proportioned — hands and feet small, but in good proportion to the rest of my body, my height a little rising five feet three inches. My forehead of good height and rather broad, the size of my head by hatter's measure $6\frac{7}{8}$, a good proportion. My eyes hazel, the left, from an injury received in my youth, defective in vision and slightly smaller than my right one, which is very strong. In past years when much subject to the headache, my poor eye was generally affected considerably thereby with pain. My nose rather long and large, mouth wide, lips thin, upper lip short, full round chin — on the whole I conclude that I could never have passed for aught but an ordinary looking person, towards which my small stature has contributed.

I am of an excitable temperament, but of late years not subject to anger. I believe that I am free from any constitutional or acquired disease. I have

a mark of a light brown color upon the right side of my neck, and each little finger is crooked slightly inward at the upper joint. Old Montaigne himself could not complain of my want of particulars in this description of my person. I might add, however, that although my feelings are quickly moved in sympathy for human or brute suffering, I do not consider myself a particularly liberal or open-handed man. I may not be deficient in this respect, but great generosity and self-sacrifice I conclude not to be among my more redeeming traits of character.

December 1st, 1858.

Another December! Well, welcome old month of cold and storm, yet not without smiles and sunshine withal — as well as these milder days of thaw and mist equally acceptable to me, season for woodland walks when the shelter of the old woods is so welcome. Old friend, I welcome thee.

1858.

December 7th, Tuesday. Dull and cloudy. In town this A. M. Saw Channing at the Mercury office, who informed of Thoreau's intended visit to me with his English friend, Thomas Cholmondeley, of Hodnet, Shropshire. Received a letter from Thoreau on the arrival of the morning mail to this end. At home this P. M., went to the depot at head of the river (Tarkiln Hill) on arrival of evening train from Boston, where I met Thoreau and his friend Cholmondeley. Spent evening in the

Shanty with them, talking of the English poets — Gray, Tennyson, Wordsworth, etc. Retired at ten o'clock.

8th, Wednesday. Dull, cloudy, and drizzly. Spent the forenoon in the Shanty with Thoreau and Cholmondeley talking of mankind and his relationships here and hereafter. Walked with C. to the rocky bluff beyond the village to get a view of New Bedford. Smoked after dinner with C. while Thoreau and Walton examined Anna's collection of plants. Thoreau and Cholmondeley walked. Mr. C. is a tall spare man thirty-five years of age, fair and fresh complexion, blue eyes, light brown and fine hair, nose small Roman, beard light and worn full with mustache. A man of fine culture and refinement of manner, educated at Oriel College, Oxford, of an old Cheshire family by his father, and Shropshire by his mother; his father a clergyman of the Church of England, his mother sister of Bishop Heber. Spent evening in the sitting-room talking of the old writers, Chaucer, &c.

9th. Thoreau and Cholmondeley walked to town this forenoon and back at dinner.

10th, Friday. Clear and cold. My friends Thoreau and Cholmondeley left at 7½ A. M. to take the train at Tarkiln Hill.

July, 1859.

17th, Sunday. "A red letter day" as Charles Lamb would say. Clear and fine. Wind W. by N. Left home at 9 A. M., rode out to Sampson's.

Soon after my arrival at Sampson's, while seated under the piazza, two gentlemen pedestrians came up from the northward who proved to be H. G. O. Blake and his friend Theophilus Brown, both near friends of H. D. Thoreau, having walked from their home, Worcester, and bound to the end of Cape Cod. The meeting was very agreeable to me, and I think also to them. After dinner we walked to the top of "King Philip's Lookout" and the west shore of Long Pond, where we bathed. A severe thunder-gust came up from the northeast about 7, which wrought in a few minutes the pond, a short time before calm and smooth, into a furious state, waves of considerable size dashing against the shore, and the sailboats dashing at their moorings as though they might *swamp* at any moment. It passed over to the S. E. in the course of an hour, and clear starlight succeeded, but warm and close air.

Retired at 10, after a walk with Messrs. Blake and Brown by the shore of the pond. Slept in the S. W. room where I lodged last year.

18th, Monday. Clear, fine, and warm. Rose at $6\frac{1}{2}$, found my friends Blake and Brown already at their breakfast. After breakfast the landlord, Sam'l Briggs, kindly took his sailboat and went to the crossing place at Long Point for the purpose of landing Blake and Brown on their way to Wareham and thence to Provincetown, whom I accompanied; after a pleasant conversation on various matters during the sail, we parted with mutual good-will and farewells, they standing on the shore under the

shade of the old oaks and waving their hats as we set sail, and so we parted after a pleasant interview of some hours.

1859.

Nov. 19th, Saty. Left home for Concord at $10\frac{1}{2}$ A. M., arrived at Concord at $5\frac{1}{2}$ P. M., leaving the cars at Concord depot, walked down to the village bookstore (Mr. Stacey's) where I found Mr. Alcott, by whose invitation I was going to visit him; also saw Thoreau at the post-office. Received with much kindness by Mrs. Alcott and her two daughters, Louisa and Abby. Spent the evening with Mr. A. in his library, where he has a wood fire on the hearth. Their place is very retired, the house an old farmhouse which Mr. A. has fitted up at little expense in a very tasteful manner, and made it a suitable home for a philosopher and poet.

20th, Sunday. Clear and cold. Spent the forenoon in the library with Mr. Alcott, looking after and examining his old books. I walked this P. M. with Thoreau to Walden Pond and the woods around. Took tea with T. and called upon Channing and smoked a pipe with him; returned to Thoreau's, met Edmund Hosmer, an intelligent farmer, there. Talked on religious faith, &c., returned to Mr. Alcott's late in the evening.

21st, Monday. Clear and milder. Walked this forenoon with Mr. Alcott beyond the old parsonage of Dr. Ripley, looking at farms, Mr. Alcott being desirous for me to come to Concord with my family

to live. Left Mr. A.'s hospitable roof after dinner to visit my friend Thoreau. Mr. A. and his family are vegetarians, and live very simply on homely but wholesome fare, and enjoy good health. My visit was a very pleasant one, giving me the feeling of much ease and comfort. Called on Mr. Emerson with Mr. A. this A. M.

22d, Tuesday. Unsettled. Called after breakfast on Channing, who left me below in his kitchen and went to his room in the attic. Proceeded to Mr. Alcott's, dined with Thoreau, spent part of the afternoon with him at Mr. Alcott's in the library, walked after with T. in the dark as far as the Hosmer farm, sat with Thoreau in his room talking till 11.

23d, Wednesday. Walked after breakfast to Edmund Hosmer's farm, spent an hour with him and his youngest daughter, an intelligent and well educated young woman. Called at Mr. Alcott's and dined with him in his library on boiled rice, grated cheese, cider, and apples. Walked this P. M. with Thoreau to the Hallowell farm; returned to Thoreau's room; plain talk, perhaps too much so. Called at Mr. Alcott's this evening; he was at Mr. Emerson's. Sat till nearly 9 with the two young ladies; introduced to Mr. Pratt, engaged to Miss Anna Alcott, who was also in the room a short time. Spent the night at the Middlesex House, kept by a Mr. Newton, formerly a stage-driver between Taunton and Boston. Retired at 10. Talk in the bar-room with several persons.

24th, Thursday. Clear and fine for the season. Left Concord at $8\frac{1}{2}$ A. M.

After having kept the temperature of the weather for many years the constant observation of the thermometer has become irksome to me, and of late I generally omit to make a record from it; and, besides, so far as my own purposes are concerned, can tell so nearly the temperature that I do not need the use of the thermometer, and I like to be exempt from too much use of these sort of aids. I could do very well without a watch — a sun-dial would answer all general purposes. We lose so much by these artificial aids that our instincts and memory are enervated by them. The true philosophy is to ascertain how much we can do without. But most people labor to encumber themselves with the innumerable miscalled *conveniences* with which old-fashioned comfort is quite smothered. I must shake still more these non-essentials, and learn, if possible, what a wise man in this day only needs.

December, 1859.

Friday, 2d.[1] To-day at 12 M. John Brown was probably executed at Charlestown, Va., for a noble but *apparently* ineffectual attempt to emancipate slaves. My sympathy for the brave and self-sacrificing old man has been deeply aroused. His sufferings are now probably all over, and his body rests in peace, the bloody requisitions of the law having been satisfied.

THE RIVEN OAK.

Firm the oak upon the hill-top,
  Though its branches may be torn,
Standeth in its solemn glory,
  Standeth solemn and forlorn.

Though the lightning rend asunder
  And prostrate the noble bole,
Acorns that have fallen under
  Shall increase a thousand-fold.

So old Brown of Ossawatomie,
  With his sons in blood and death,
Like the dragon's teeth when planted
  Serried armies shall bequeath.

Feeling sad at the mournful close of poor John Brown's life, now I trust with his Father and his God beyond the reach of the tyrant slaveholder. Cloudy this afternoon, and all nature affected with a general gloom, as it were at the loss of the brave old philanthropic hero now lying dead and cold in the hands of his enemies and the enemies of humanity.

John Brown cannot die; his body may perish, but that which was the most himself, his noble, self-sacrificing spirit, will survive, and that object to which he so heartily devoted himself and for which he has died, will be hastened to its accomplishment by his cruel and untimely death, untimely so far as

the means used to effect it on the part of his tyrannical captors.

3d, Saty. Learned that John Brown was hanged in Charlestown, Virginia, yesterday, between 11 and 12 A. M., — a martyr to the cause of the oppressed slave, — meeting death with the dignity and composure of a Christian martyr, as he undoubtedly was, although I do not think he took the wisest or best way to effect his noble object, — that of liberating the slaves of this *professed* republic. Peace to his memory. Good men will bless his name, and his memory will be venerated by the wise and good.

His death must prove the destruction of the blood-cemented union of this nation.

Mark this record, whosoever may at some future day read this page. I would make this record with due humility, and with a tender solicitude for the best interests of my countrymen. I wish not the blood of the tyrant, but that he may become abashed and conscience-stricken before God. My soul truly yearneth for peace and prosperity to all mankind, but cruelty and slavery must cease.

January, 1860.

The following are the resolutions I offered yesterday the 26th at the Anti-slavery Meeting, Boston.

Resolved, That dreadful as slavery is, its abolition, in order to secure the highest good of humanity, must be accomplished without bloodshed.

Resolved, That to be a true abolitionist we must

be true to humanity, and therefore any measures which violate the great cause of human rights, though intended for the good of the slave, must result in evil.

Resolved, That if the Anti-slavery movement be conducted on the true principles of peace and good-will we can reasonably absolve ourselves from any violent measures adopted by others for the liberation of the oppressed.

Oct. 11th, 1860. Almost every real enjoyment we experience comes to us simply and naturally. The state of mind which constantly seeks some new form of pleasure rarely accomplishes its object. A philosophical composure is therefore much to be coveted and encouraged. Seeking the companionship of those distinguished for their talents and acquirements, if they are beyond our own sphere and compass, is rarely rewarded with success and usually ends in disappointment.

It is better to lead an austere life of virtue, than one of amiable weaknesses that partake of the spirit of sensuality, though not really criminal in character.

If nature has not made you a true man strive to become one.

8th month, 1861 (Henry Thoreau's last visit, 19th to 24th). Rode up to the depot for my friend Thoreau, who came by the P. M. train from Boston. Spent evening conversing, Thoreau giving an interesting and graphic account of his late visit to

the Mississippi, St. Anthony Falls, &c., — gone two months.

20th, Thursday. Clear and fine, wind E. At home this A. M. talking a good deal with Thoreau in the Shanty. Rode with Thoreau this P. M., visited the old house at Thomas Wood's farm. In relation to my friend Thoreau's health my impression is that his case is a very critical one as to recovery; he has a bad cough and expectorates a good deal, is emaciated considerably, his spirits, however, appear as good as usual, his appetite good. Unless some favorable symptom shows itself soon I fear that he will gradually decline. He is thinking of going to a warm climate for the winter, but I think a judicious hydropathic treatment at home would be much better for him.

21st, Wednesday. Clear and fine, perfect weather. Rode to town with Thoreau this A. M. Got an ambrotype of him at Dunshee's which we all think an excellent likeness. Thence we drove to Clark's Cove and so by Resolved Howland's corner and new road to town. Got September number Atlantic Magazine. Called at post-office and home by 1 P. M.

22d. Long talk with my friend Thoreau on various matters this A. M. Rode this P. M. round by White's factory with T. Walked over the ridge road called the "back-bone of Acushnet" with T.

23d, Friday. Rode this P. M. to Sassaquin Pond with Thoreau, walked round from the north end, where we left our horse and wagon (Billy and old

buggy wagon). T. found one or more plants new to him, at least rare. I bathed in a little cove on the west shore, a mild, pleasant afternoon. Home by $6\frac{1}{2}$.

24th, Saturday. Clear and fine. Our friend H. D. Thoreau who came on Monday P. M. left us by 7.10 A. M. train. Rode with him to Head River depot. The visit I trust has been agreeable to him as well as myself. His health is very poor, being afflicted with bronchitis, and the recovery of his health is I fear quite uncertain; still he has a good deal of toughness and great will, which are in his favor. It is my earnest desire that he may recover.

NEW BEDFORD, Sept. 1, 1861.

DEAR THOREAU, — Dr. Denniston, to whom I recommended you to go, has kindly consented on his way from New Bedford to Northampton, to go to Concord to see you. He has had much experience and success in the treatment of bronchitis, and I hope his visit to you will result in your placing yourself under his care, which I much desire.

Should the Doctor have the time, and you feel able, please show him a little of the Concord worthies and much oblige,

Yours truly,

D. RICKETSON.

Sept. 1st. Feeling rather dull and anxious whether or not to go to Concord with Dr. D. tomorrow.

Sept. 2d, Monday. Left home by A. M. train for Boston with Dr. Denniston to see my friend H. D. Thoreau, the Doctor professionally. After talk and examination by the Doctor walked with him and T. to the battle-ground; on return met Mr. Alcott, who joined us. Dr. D. left for Boston at 6½ P. M. I walked home with Mr. Alcott. Returned to Mr. Thoreau's by 9.

3d, Tuesday. Weather warm and cloudy. Spent forenoon with Mr. Alcott in his study, Thoreau there part of the time. On our way visited an antiquarian collection of a Mr. Davis in company with Miss Sophia Thoreau and Mr. Thoreau. Dined with Mr. Alcott, his wife, and daughters Louisa and Abby.

Returned to Thoreau's to tea, walked this evening in the dark, got lost for a time, but by retracing my steps found my way again. Dark cloudy evening, warm. Talked with T. till ten.

4th, Wednesday. Clear and fine, walked to Walden Pond with Mr. Thoreau, bathed; on our way called on Mr. Emerson; walked this P. M. with T. to Mr. Edmund Hosmer's farm, Mr. H. with us from the post-office. Saw Channing in the street, but no word between us, I not knowing how he would meet me if I addressed him. Took tea at Mrs. Brooke's, returned to Mr. T.'s at 7½, walked alone on the hill beyond the bridge by the Wheeler farm, talked with T. till 9½. Clear, fine evening.

5th, Thursday. Clear and fine. Left Concord at 8½ A. M., my friend T. accompanying me to the

depot; introduced to young Horace Mann, Mr. T.'s late companion to Minnesota; arrived home to dinner.

I think T. seemed improving when I left him at Concord. Dr. D., though he faithfully examined his case, was unable to awaken in T. an interest in his mode of treating disease by the water practice. The Doctor kindly invited T. to come to Northampton and stop a fortnight as a guest with him; discouraged his going to the West Indies. I hope T. may be improving and need no Doctor or absence from home.

1862.

May 4th. Wrote and mailed a letter to Henry D. Thoreau this forenoon.

7th. Heard of the death of my valued and respected friend, Henry D. Thoreau, who died at his home in Concord yesterday, aged 44 years. An irreparable loss; one of the best and truest of men. *Non omnis moriar* — May 7, 1897.

9th. Rode to town with Louisa; got ambrotype of Henry D. Thoreau at Dunshee's. Arranged H. D. Thoreau's letters to me, 27 in all, commencing Oct., 1854, and ending Oct. 14, 1861. His first visit to me was in Dec., 1854, and his last in August, 1861; during the interval he visited me at least once a year.

22d. Received a letter from Sophia Thoreau relating to the death of her brother.

23d. Wrote Sophia Thoreau and sent an ambrotype of her late brother Henry, which I had taken

on his last visit here, in August, 1861; mailed both at the village office. My lines entitled "Walden" appeared in the "Liberator" of this week.

26th. Received a letter from Sophia Thoreau acknowledging receipt of the ambrotype of Henry Thoreau which I sent last Saturday.

WALDEN.

Dedicated to Henry D. Thoreau.

Here once a poet most serenely lived,
A poet and philosopher, forsooth —
For in him both have joined and greatly thrived,
And found content before the God of Truth.

A plain-set man, a man of culture rare,
Who left an honor on old Harvard's walls;
An honest man, content with Nature's fare,
The spot more rich where'er his shadow falls.

Near by the shore his cabin reared its head,
With his own hands he built the simple dome,
And here alone to thought and study wed,
He found a genial though an humble home.

From the scant produce of a neighboring field,
Tilled by his hands, he got his honest bread;
But Nature for him greater crops did yield,
In rich abundance daily for him spread.

The woods, the fields, the lake, and all around,
Both man and beast; and bird and insect small,
In his keen mind a shrewd expression found;
For truth and beauty he discerned in all.

A jurist learned in Nature's court supreme,
A wise physician, priest, and teacher, too,
For whom each sphere reveals a ready theme,
And wisdom is exhaled, both old and new.

While others unto foreign lands have gone,
And in old footsteps travelled far and wide,
This man at home a richer prize hath won,
From fresher fields unknown to wealth and pride.

His own good limbs have borne him well about,
Whose constant use hath made him staunch and strong,
As many a luckless wight hath proven out,
And Concord soil in him hath found a tongue.

Henceforth her hills, her gently flowing stream,
Her woods and fields shall classic ground become,
And e'en the village street with interest beam,
Where one so nobly true hath found a home.

To Walden Pond the ingenuous youth shall hie,
And mark the spot where stood the hermitage,
But ye who seek 'mid glittering scenes to vie,
Let other haunts your vanity engage.

Go on, brave man! in thy own chosen way;
How many ills of life thou dost escape!
Thy brave example others shall essay,
And from thy lessons happier lives may shape;

Shall learn from thee to find a ready store
Of choicest treasures spread before their eyes,
For Nature ever keeps an open door,
And bids a welcome to the good and wise.

17 Jan'y, 1860.

REFLECTION.

My mind sometimes appears to me comparable to a harp that plays whatever tune the controlling power passes over its strings.

5 month, 11th, 1863.

1866.

March, 1866. 28th, Wednesday. Spring again. Clear and fine. Wind changes from N. W. to S. by 8 A. M.

The birds are sweetly singing once more, not having lost their faith in a kind Providence, and neither would I. The Song Sparrow, Blue-Bird, Robin, Linnet, making melody among our trees — these, with the cry of the Bluejay and Golden-winged Woodpecker, and the sweet blending of the Meadow-lark give a cheer and freshness to Nature, and the shrunken spirit of the sensitive among mankind. How often have I felt the force of the sentiment and word of Francis Jeffrey: "If it were not for my love of beautiful Nature and poetry, my heart would have died within me long ago." How beautiful are thy works, O God, as seen in the opening of the year!

A casket full of beauty
Reminding us of duty, —
Of hearts full of gratitude,
For thy sweet beatitude,
In sending forth thy cheer,
To grace the vernal year.

October, 1866.

REFLECTIONS.

Cowper had published his Task before he was my age, and had several years before published his first volume of poems, — "Table Talk," "Truth, Hope, and Charity." Most men accomplish their best efforts long before fifty years of age. How unreasonable would it be for me to expect to perform anything at my period of life of a high order or lasting nature in the walks of literature, particularly in poetry! It was my ambition when a young man to do something in the way of verse that might be of value to others and survive me. I held my little gift (as it has proved) in sacredness, and thanks be to God, however humble, I never profaned it to low purposes. I have never, I believe, written a line, so far as its moral bearing is concerned, that I should be ashamed of. I have composed many poems that now appear to me of far less merit than at the time they were written, but I still regard with reverence the sweet and sacred periods of poetic pleasure when they were written. Oh, halcyon days, how have ye fled and gone, yet dear in memory!

At forty years of age I find upon survey of my life and its results, that neither my education nor talents would warrant me in the hope or expectation of doing anything remarkable in the field of letters; and that I must content myself with a humbler walk in life than I had aspired to. I have in a good measure conformed to this conclusion, and for the

past thirteen years have felt more and more that my sphere is not a large or luminous one. I have for the past five years been striving to benefit others in the cause of Truth and Christian liberality, particularly among Friends or Quakers, but I fear with but little success; so that I now begin to feel that I may be excused from much further effort in this line, and simply attend to the duties of life, hoping to live a pure and acceptable one to my heavenly Father, so that my end may be in peace. Gracious Father and beloved Saviour, grant my humble prayer.

1872.

SOUNDS I PARTICULARLY ENJOY AS ASSOCIATED IN MEMORY.

1. The distant lowing of cattle (cows).

2. The distant tinkling of the cow-bells, particularly at eventide.

3. The distant barking of a large dog from some remote farmhouse late in Autumn, of a moonlight evening.

4. The neighing of a horse in a pasture, and the whinneying in the stable in recognition of his master or asking for food.

5. The early crowing of cocks, and the attempts of cockerels to crow. The cackling of hens in warm spells of winter.

6. The song of the sparrow in early Spring, — also that of the Bluebird and Robin.

7. The low call of the robin about raspberry-time, and the low sweet summer song I now hear, Aug. 9th, 1872, 4 o'clock P. M., from our thicket.

8. The chirping of crickets, particularly the Fall-cricket and Harvest-fly, so full of soothing melody.

9. The soft sweet voice of woman.

10. The wind through pines.

11. The bell-like sound I have heard through our elms, at our old home, New Bedford (Elm St.).

12. The sound of distant flails in Autumn.

13. Distant sleighbells of the old-fashioned sort.

14. Bells at a distance such as Cowper heard in his "Winter Morning Walk."

15. Songs associated in memory of early days, like "Fairy-like Music," "Brignal Banks" "Kelvin Grove," "Rose Tree," &c., &c.

16. The lapsing of wavelets on the shore of my favorite Middleboro Ponds, and against the boat's sides.

17. The piping of frogs in Spring, and the guttural warbling of the woodcock at this season.

18. The rippling of brooks adown their pebbly courses.

19. The softer melody of the flute and piano, accompanied by a gentle, sweet, unaffected voice.

20. The whistling of the wind about the angles of the house, or deserted places, when accompanied with no danger, and in the society of congenial friends.

21. The cry of the Bluejay, and the cawing of the crow in my autumn rambles near the woods.

22. The "drumming" of the Partridges, and the call of the Quail in spring.

23. The chirp and song of the Cheweet or Ground Robin, the former in early, the latter in later summer.

24. The sublime chant of Wild Geese while passing on their vernal and autumnal migrations.

25. The sweet soothing song of the Meadow Lark, than which nothing in natural sounds touches my heart more deeply.

26. The noonday song of the sparrow, known to me as "the Sampson sparrow" from my having heard his pleasant song in former years at our old favorite retreat near "Assowamset Pond."

We all need some great and noble purpose of life, for without this our years will drag on or slip away and we shall be found at last hopelessly shipwrecked. Arouse then, O youth, and look around for some grand object of pursuit — it may be an humble duty of every-day life that demands thy soul; but is nevertheless thy proper work and therefore noble, — spurn it not, but accept it.

Record Feb. 7, 1873. I do not know that I have an enemy in the world, in fact I think I may safely say that I have none. Of this I am sure, that I am not an enemy to any human being; and I most humbly desire to be a friend to all, inclusive of feeling and sentient creatures, and tenderly appreciative of the beauty of the productions of nature, both animate and inanimate, seeking thus to fall into the Divine harmony and to find by His all-guiding hand the path of serenity and peace I have so long sought for.

I have never been able to attain to that degree of intellectual expansion and clearness which would make me master of resources lying as it were stored away somewhere in my brain. I have compared it to an iron band about my head which would seem to repress its greater energies and particularly control my imagination, confining it to a narrow sphere. In my poetical experiences I have never been able except in a very moderate degree to record my highest and best impressions. I can see the landscape in all its beauty outstretched before me, — the fields, the woods, and distant hills, the dancing

stream, the mossy rock, the light and shade that give such charming effect to scenes of nature; the sky with its pavilion of cloud upon cloud, the music of the breeze through the pines in summer, and the roar of the tempest in winter often give me emotions and thoughts that I should in vain attempt to put into language.

May, 1885.

MY RELIGIOUS BELIEF.

I have just been reading the religious belief of Victor Hugo in his preëxistence and in his complex being, with his future hopes of meeting his friends. It has occurred to me to write down my own present religious faith or rather views: I believe in the gentle doctrines of the early Friends — particularly that of "the indwelling light," as the first great teacher and guide, it being "the Divine immanence" or "Holy Spirit;" also the Christ within the soul, according to St. John, the true light from the beginning and according to St. Paul "the grace of God which bringeth salvation." This also as the true interpreter of the Sacred Volume whose pages bear record of this divine manifestation to mankind from the earliest ages. I am convinced of the wisdom of God's plan for man's redemption from sin, as a free gift, and not from his own merits lest he boast, thus productive of that humiliation which is man's true exaltation. I believe, therefore, that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah and Saviour, in whose crucifixion and example, mysterious as it

may be, I hope for mercy and happiness beyond the grave.

At the hour of death I hope for grace from on high, to resign myself with childlike confidence into the hands of our Heavenly Father, the great and good Creator, whose protecting care over me in my past youth, manhood, and old age, I have so often witnessed. With a sense of my own unworthiness through redeeming power and goodness I would trust in him alone, the Fountain and source of life, the God and Saviour of mankind.

As a birthright member of the Society of Friends, I would express my continued faith in its Christian doctrines, so simple and true, so humane and charitable when rightly observed, feeling that in the future they will be seen to be the truest interpretation of the Christian truth. So, asking God's blessing upon those who may be called upon to suffer for its principles I would close.

How would I die? With heartfelt trust
In Him who gave me life and light,
Our God and Saviour — good Supreme,
Who governs all in love and might.
How would I die? In peace with all,
In resignation, and in hope;
Released from every earthly thrall,
As visions of the future ope.

Jan., 1889.

25th. This is the 130th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns, whose poems still hold a warm place in my heart, particularly "The Cotter's Saturday Night," "Highland Mary," and many of his

sweet songs. I would to-night respond to the following closing stanza of one of our dear Longfellow's last poems — a graceful tribute to the memory of Scotia's favorite poet, —

"His presence haunts this room to-night,
A form of mingled mist and light,
From that far coast.
Welcome beneath this roof of mine!
Welcome! this vacant chair is thine,
Dear guest and ghost."

August, 1892.

REFLECTIONS.

I have been in the habit of writing occasionally for many years my thoughts when particularly led to a subject, and now it occurs to me to record for future reference and I hope encouragement, thoughts that have just crossed my mind while looking, as I am frequently led to do, in my advanced years, to the closing scene.

While the future is largely concealed from man, yet hope grows stronger as more required. Although my life has not been without its sorrows and disappointments, the bright spots are predominant, and those which happily most present themselves to my mind. I have ever loved nature in her calm and peaceful sphere, and simple pleasures have ever been my choice. I have been much blessed in my family relations, and life to me has on the whole been an unusually serene and happy one. For all of which I would thank the Great and Good Author of our being, and the kind parents, the industry of

my dear father having afforded me the means of a moderate independence. Domestic affection, Friendship, and Nature have made my life peaceful and pleasant. I fear that I am too much attached still to my earthly existence to leave without a struggle, but I will hope that the great Sovereign of the Universe will sustain me in my closing experience with resignation and hope.

No man is truly great until he has risen above the incentive of human praise for doing good.

No one is capable of producing a great work in the science of letters or art until he has passed beyond the motive of human reward. In fact it seems to be necessary that the man should be so much superior even to his best efforts that when fame reaches him, he has already risen superior to its charms. Aspiration belongs more particularly to the season of youth, and undoubtedly has its valuable influence, but by the time any great or noble work is accomplished that reward which was so ardently desired is no longer coveted; and fame once truly obtained becomes nearly worthless to its possessor. Humility must ever be the accompaniment of human greatness.

XII

EXTRACTS FROM HENRY D. THOREAU'S JOURNAL

EXTRACTS FROM HENRY D. THOREAU'S JOURNAL

FIRST VISIT TO DANIEL RICKETSON.

Dec. 25th, 1854.

To New Bedford via Cambridge.

I think that I never saw a denser growth than the young white cedars in swamps on the Taunton and New Bedford Railroad. In most places it looked as if there was not room for a man to pass between the young trees. That part of the country is remarkably level and wooded. The evergreen prinos very common in the low ground. At New Bedford saw the casks of oil covered with seaweed to prevent fire; the weed holds moisture. Town not lively. Whalers abroad at this season.

Ricketson has "Bewick's British Birds," two vols.; "Æsop's Fables," one vol.; "Select Fables," one vol. (partly the same); "Quadrupeds," one vol.

Has taken pains to obtain them. The tail-pieces were the attraction to him. He suggested to Howitt to write his Abodes of the Poets. ["Homes and Haunts of the British Poets," 2 vols., 8vo, Richard Bentley, London, 1847. — EDITORS.]

Dec. 25th, 1854.

At Ricketson's (New Bedford).

I do not remember to have ever seen such a day

as this in Concord. There is no snow here (though there has been excellent sleighing at Concord since the 5th ult.), but it is very muddy, the frost coming out of the ground as in spring with us. I went to walk in the woods with R.; it was wonderfully warm and pleasant, and the cockerels crowed just as in a spring day at home. I felt the winter breaking up in me, and if I had been at home I should have tried to write poetry. They told me that this was not a rare day there. That they had little or no winter such as we have, and it was owing to the influence of the Gulf Stream, which was only sixty miles from Nantucket at the nearest or 120 miles from them. In mid-winter when the wind was S. E. or even S. W. they frequently had days as warm and debilitating as in summer. There is a difference of a degree in latitude, between Concord and New Bedford, but far more in climate. The American holly is quite common there, with its red berries still holding on, and is now their Christmas evergreen. I heard the lark sing, strong and sweet, and saw robins. R. lives in that part of New Bedford, three miles out of the town, called the Head of the River, *i. e.* the Acushnet River. There is a Quaker meeting-house there. Such an ugly shed without a tree or bush about it, which they call their meeting-house (without steeple of course), is altogether repulsive to me, like a powder-house or grave. And even the quietness and perhaps unworldliness of an aged Quaker has something ghostly and saddening about it — as it were a mere preparation for the grave.

H. D. Thoreau, from bust

R. said that pheasants from England (where they are not indigenous) had been imported to Naushon, and were killed there.

Sept. 29th, 1855.

Go to Daniel Ricketson's, New Bedford. Got out at Tarkiln Hill or Head of the River Station, three miles this side of New Bedford. Recognized an old Dutch barn. R.'s sons, Arthur and Walton, were just returning from tautog fishing in Buzzard's Bay, and I tasted one at supper, — singularly curved from snout to tail.

Sept. 30th, 1855.

Sunday. Rode with R. to Sassacowens Pond, in the north part of New Bedford on the Taunton road. Called also Tobey's Pond, from Jonathan Tobey, who lives close by, who has a famous law-suit, all about a road he built to Taunton years ago, which he has not got paid for. In which suit he told us he had spent $30,000; employed Webster. Tobey said the pond was called from the last of the Indians who lived here 100 or 150 years ago, and that you can still see his cellar-hole, etc., on the west side of the pond. We saw floating in the pond the bottom of an old log canoe, the sides rolled up, and some great bleached trunks of trees washed up. Found two quartz arrow-heads on the neighboring fields. Noticed the Ailanthus or tree of heaven about Tobey's house, giving it a tropical look.

Thence we proceeded to Long Pond, stopping at the S. end, which is in Freetown about 9 miles from

R.'s. The main part is in Middleborough. It is about 4 miles long by $\frac{7}{8}$ wide, measuring on the maps of Middleborough and of the State (a man said 5 to 15 feet deep or 20 in some places), with at least three islands in it. This and the neighboring ponds were remarkably low. We first came out on to a fine soft white sandy beach 2 rods wide near the S. E. end, and walked westerly; it was very wild, and not a boat to be seen. The sandy bottom in the shallow water from the shore to three or four rods out, or as far as we could see, was thickly furrowed by clams, chiefly the common unio, and a great many were left dead or dying high and dry within a few feet of the water. These furrows, with each its clam at the end, though headed different ways — all ways — described various figures on the bottom, some pretty perfect circles, figure 6's and 3's, whiplashes curling to snap, bow-knots, serpentine lines, and often crossing each other's tracks like the paths of rockets or bombshells. I never saw these forms so numerous. Soon we came to a stony and rocky shore abutting on a meadow fringed with wood, with quite a primitive aspect. With the stones the clams ceased. Saw two places where invisible inhabitants make fires and do their washing on the shore, some barrels or firkins, etc., still left. Some of the rocks at high-water mark were very large and wild, which the water had undermined on the edge of the woods. Here, too, were some great bleached trunks of trees high and dry. Saw a box-tortoise which had been recently killed on

the rocky shore. After walking in all about ⅓ or ½ a mile, came again to a sandy shore, where the sand-bars lately cast up and saturated with water sank under us. There we saw, washed up dead, a great pickerel 23 inches long (we measured it on a cane), and there was projecting from its mouth the tail of another pickerel. As I wished to ascertain the size of the last, but could not pull it out, for I found it would part first at the tail, it was so firmly fixed, I cut into the large one (though it was very offensive) and found that the head and much more was digested, and that the smaller fish had been at least fifteen inches long. The big one had evidently been choked by trying to swallow too large a mouthful. Such was the penalty it had paid for its voracity. There were several suckers and some minnows also washed up near by. They get no iron from these ponds now.

Went to a place easterly from the south end of this pond called "Joe's Rocks," just over the Rochester line, where a cousin of Thomas Morton told us that one Joe Ashley secreted himself in the Revolution around the fissures of the rocks, and being supplied with food by his friends, could not be found, though he had enlisted in the army.

Returning, we crossed the Acushnet River where it takes its rise, coming out of a swamp. Looked for arrow-heads in a field where were many quahog, oyster, scallop, clam, and winkles (pyrola) shells, probably brought by the whites four or five miles from the salt water. Also saw these in places where

Indians had frequented. Went into an old deserted house — the Brady house — where two girls who had lived in the family of R. and his brother had been born and bred. R. said that they were particularly bright girls and lovers of Nature; had read my "Walden;" now keep school, and have still an affection for their old house. We visited the spring they had used, saw the great willow-tree at the corner of the house, in which one of the girls, an infant in the cradle, thought that the wind began, as she looked out of the window and heard the wind sough through it; saw how the chimney in the garret was eked out with flat stones, bricks being dear.

Arthur Ricketson showed me in his collection what was apparently an Indian mortar, which had come from Sampson's in Middleborough. It was a dark granite-like stone some ten inches long by eight wide and four thick, with a regular round cavity worn in it four inches in diameter and one and one half deep, also a smaller one opposite on the other side. He also showed me the perfect shell of *Emys guttata* with some of the internal bones, which had been found between the plastering and boarding of a meeting-house at the Head of the River (in New Bedford) which was 75 or 80 years old, and was torn down 15 or 20 years ago, supposed to have crawled in when the meeting-house was built, though it was not very near water. It had lost no scales, but was bleached to a dirty white, sprinkled with spots still yellow.

TOBEY'S POND

Oct. 1st, 1855.

Among R.'s books is Bewick's "Æsop's Fables." On a leaf succeeding the title-page is engraved a facsimile of his handwriting to the following effect:

NEWCASTLE, January, 1824.

To Thomas Bewick & Son, Dr.

L. S. D.

To a Demy copy of Æsop's Fables 18

Received the above with thanks.

Thomas Bewick. Robert Elliot Bewick.

Then there was some fire-red sea moss adhering to the page just over the view of a distant church and windmill (probably Newcastle by moonlight) and at the bottom of the page: —

No. 809.

Thomas Bewick.

His Mark.

It being the impression of his thumb.

A cloudy, somewhat rainy day. Mr. R. brought me a snail, a *Helix albolabris*, or possibly *thyroides*, which he picked from under a rock where he was having a wall built. It had put out its stag, or, rather, giraffe-like head and neck, out to about two inches, the whole length of the point behind being about three inches, mainly a neck of a somewhat buffish white or a grayish buff color, or buff brown, shining with moisture, with a short head, deer-like and giraffe-like horns or tentacular on its top, black at tip $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch long, and also 2 short horns on mouth. Its neck, etc., flat beneath, by which surface it draws or slides itself along in a chair. It is

surprisingly long and large to be contained in that shell which moves atop of it. It moves at the rate of an inch or half an inch a minute over a level surface, whether horizontal or perpendicular, and holds quite tight to it. The shell like a whorled dome to a portion of a building. Its foot (?) extends to a point behind. It commonly touches by an inch of its flat under side, flattening out by as much of its length as it touches. Shell rather darker, mottled (?) than body. The tentacula become all dark as they are drawn in, and it can draw them or contract them straight back to nought. No obvious eyes (?) or mouth.

P. M. Rode to New Bedford and called on Mr. Green, a botanist, but had no interview with him. Walked through Mrs. Arnold's Arboretum. Rode to the beach at Clark's Cove where Gen. Gray landed his 4000 troops in the Revolution. Found there in abundance *Anomia ephippium*, the irregular golden-colored shells, *Modiola plicatula* (rayed mussel), *Crepidula fornicata* worn, *Pecten concentricus* alive, and one or two more. Returned by the new Point Road, four miles long and R. said 80 feet wide (I should think by recollection more) and cost $50,000. A magnificent road by which New Bedford has appropriated the sea. Passed salt-works still in active operation, wind mills going. A series of frames with layers of bushes one above another to a great height up for filtering. Went into a spermaceti candle and oil factory. Arthur R. has a soapstone pot (Indian) about 9 inches long, more than an inch

thick, with a kind of handles at the end or protuberances.

Oct. 2d, 1855.

Rode to Sampson's in Middleborough; a cloudy day; 13 miles. Many quails in road. Passed over a narrow neck between the two Quittacus Ponds, after first visiting Great Quittacus on right of road and gathering clam-shells there as I had done at Long Pond and intend to do at Assawampset. These shells, labelled, will be good mementos of the ponds. It was a great wild pond with large islands in it. Saw a loon on Little or West Quittacus from road, an old bird with a black bill. The bayonet or rainbow rush was common along the shore. In Backus's Act. of Mid. Hist. Coll. Vol. 30, 1st series, Philip once saw an army to waylay there, Capt. Church in Assawampset Neck, which is in the S. part of Mid. Perhaps this was it. Just beyond this neck by the roadside, between the road and West Quittacus Pond, is an old Indian burying-ground. R. thought it was used before the whites came, though of late by the Wampanoag Indians. This was the old stage-road from New Bedford to Boston. It occupies a narrow strip between the road and the pond about a dozen rods wide at the north end and narrower at the south, and is covered with a middling growth of oak, birch, hickory, etc. Chestnut, oaks (perhaps *Q. melana*) grow near there. I gathered some leaves and one large acorn from the buggy. There were two stones with inscriptions. R. copied one as follows, V. Scrap.

"In memory of Jean Squeen, who died April 13th, 1794, in her 23rd year. Also of Benj'n, who died at sea April 22d, 1799, in his 26th year. Children of Lydia Squeen, a native."

On east shore of Little Quittacus by roadside old stage-road from New Bedford to Boston, 30 to 40 feet from shore of pond, another stone, Lydia Squeen died 1812, aged 75.

Rocks which have curious marks thereon (supposed to have been done by the Indians) which appear like the steppings of a person, &c.

We soon left the main road and turned into a path in the right leading to Assawampset Pond a mile distant. There too was a fine sandy beach, the south shore of the pond three or four rods wide. We walked along the part called Betty's Neck. This pond is by the map of Middleborough a little more than three miles long in a straight line N–W and S–E across Pocksha and nearly two wide. We saw the village of Middleborough Four Corners far across it, yet no village on the shore. As we walked easterly the shore became stony. On one large slate rock with a smooth surface sloping toward the Pond, at high-water mark were some inscriptions or sculptures which R. had copied about ten years since, thus:

1749. B. Hill, Israel Felix.

The B. Hill is comparatively modern. R. said that Israel Felix was an old Indian preacher; Ac. to Backus in Hist. Coll. Vol. 3d, 1st series, Thomas

Felix was an Indian teacher in Middleborough once. The foot appeared very ancient, though pecked in only half an inch. It was squarish form and broad at the toes — like the representations of some sculptured in rocks at the west. For a long time we could only discern 1749 and B. Hill; at length we detected the foot, and after my companion had given up, concluding that the water and the ice had obliterated the rest within ten years, I at last rather felt with my fingers than saw with my eyes the faintly graven and lichen-covered letters of Israel Felix's name. We had looked on that surface full fifteen minutes in vain. Yet I felt out the letters after all with certainty.

In a description of Middleborough in the Hist. Coll. Vol. 3d, 1810, signed Nehemiah Bennett, Middleborough, 1793, it is said, "There is on the easterly shore of Assawampset Pond on the shore of Betty's Neck two rocks which have curious marks thereon (supposed to have been done by the Indians) which appear like the steppings of a person with naked feet which settled into the rocks. Likewise the prints of a hand on several places, with a number of other marks; also there is a rock on a high hill a little to the eastward of the old stone fishing weir, where there is the print of a person's hand in said rock." Perhaps we might have detected more on these same rocks had we read this before, for we saw that there was something on the next rock — we did not know of the weir. The same writer speaks of a settlement of Indians at "Betty's Neck

(which place took its name from an ancient Indian woman of the name of Betty Sasemore who named that neck), where there are now eight Indian houses and eight families," — between 30 and 40 souls.

I was interested by some masses of pudding-stone further along the shore. There were also a few large flat sloping slate (?) rocks. I saw a small *Emys picta* and a young snapping turtle apparently hatched this summer, the whole length when measuring, about three inches. It was larger than mine last April, and had ten very distinct points to its shell behind. I first saw it in the water near the shore.

The same Bennett quoted above adds in a postscript, "In the year 1763 Mr. Shubael Thompson found a land turtle in the north-east part of Middleborough which by some misfortune had lost one of its feet, and found the following marks on its shell, viz: 'I — W — 1747.' He marked it S. T. — 1763, and let it go. It was found again in the year 1773 by Elijah Clapp, who marked it E. C. 1773, and let it go. It was found again in 1775 by Capt. William Shaw in the month of May, who marked it W. S. 1775. It was found again by said Shaw the same year in September, about 100 yards distance from the place where he let it go. It was found again in the year 1784 by Jonathan Soule, who marked it J. S. 1784 and let it go. It was found again in the year 1791 by Zeno Smith, who marked it Z. S. and let it go, it being the last time it was

found, 44 years from the time the first marks were put on.

"Note: Joseph Soule found it in 1790 by Hayward's, V. Hist. Coll. again."

We saw five loons diving off the shore of Betty's Neck, which, instead of swimming off, approached within ten rods of us as if to reconnoitre us; only one had a black bill and that not entirely so, another was turning. Their throats were all very white.

I was surprised to see the *usnea* hanging *thick* on many apple-trees and some pears in the neighborhood of this and the other ponds, as on spruce. Sheep are pastured hereabouts.

Returning along the shore we saw a man and woman putting off in a small boat, the first we had seen. The man was black; he rowed and the woman steered. R. called to them — they approached within a couple of rods in the shallow water. "Come nearer," said R. "Don't be afraid; I ain't a-going to hurt you." The woman answered, "I never saw the man yet that I was afraid of." The man's name was Thomas Smith, and in answer to R.'s very direct questions as to how much he was of the native stock, said that he was one-fourth Indian. He then asked the woman, who sat unmoved in the stern with a brown dirt-colored dress on, a regular country woman, an acre of face (squaw-like), having first inquired of Tom if she was his woman, how much Indian blood she had in her. She did not answer directly so home a question, yet at length as good as acknowledged to be half Indian,

and said she came from Carver, where she had one sister, the only half-breed about here. Said her name was Sepit, but could not spell it. R. said, "Your nose looks rather Indiany." Where will you find a Yankee and his wife going a-fishing thus? They lived on the shore. Tom said he had seen turtles in the pond that weighed between 50 and 60. Had caught a pickerel that morning that weighed four or five pounds; had also seen them washed up with another in their mouths. Their boat was of peculiar construction and T. said it was called a sharpie, with very high sides and a remarkable run on the bottom aft, and the bottom boards were laid across coming out flush and the sides set on them; an ugly model.

CONCORD, Dec. 24th, '56.

P. M. More snow in the night and to-day, making nine or ten inches. To Walden and Baker Farm with Ricketson, it still snowing a little. Turned off from the railroad and went through Wheeler or Owl Wood. The snow is very light, so that sleighs cut through it and there is but little sleighing. It is very handsome now on the trees by the main path in Wheeler Wood, where on the weeds and twigs that rise above the snow, it rests just like down, light towers of down with the bare extremity of the twig peeping out above. We push through the light dust, throwing it before our legs as a husbandman grain which he is sowing. It is only in still paths in the woods that it rests on the trees much.

Am surprised to find Walden still open in the middle. When I push aside the snow with my feet the ice appears quite black by contrast. There is considerable snow on the edge of the pine woods where I used to live. It rests on the successive tiers of boughs, perhaps weighing them down so that the trees are opened into great flakes from top to bottom. The snow collects and is piled up in little columns like down about every twig and stem, and this is only seen in perfection, complete to the last flake, while it is snowing, as now.

Returned across the pond and went to Baker Farm.

Noticed at E. end of westernmost Andromeda Pond the slender spikes of *Lycopus* with half a dozen distinct little spherical dark brown whorls of pungently fragrant or spicy seeds, somewhat nutmeg-like or even like flagroot when bruised. I am not sure that the seeds of any other mint are thus fragrant now. It scents your handkerchief or pocketbook finely when the crumbled whorls are sprinkled over them.

It was very pleasant walking there before the storm was over, in the soft subdued light. We are also more domesticated in nature when our vision is confined to near and familiar objects.

Did not see a track of any animal till returning near the Wells meadow field, where many foxes (?) two of whom I had a glimpse of, had been coursing back and forth in the path and near it for ¾ of a mile; they had made quite a path.

I do not take snuff. In my winter walks I stop and bruise between my thumb and fingers the dry whorls of the *Lycopus* or water-horehound, just rising above the snow, stripping them off, and smell that. That is as near as I come to the Spice Islands. That is my smelling-bottle, my ointment.

April 2d to 15th, 1857.

Hear Ricketson describing to Alcott his bachelor uncle, James Thornton. When he awakes in the morning he lights the fire in his stove (already prepared) with a match on the end of a stick without getting up. When he gets up he first attends to his ablutions, being personally very clean; cuts off a head of tobacco to clean his teeth with, and eats a hearty breakfast, sometimes, it was said, even buttering sausages. Then he goes to a relative's store and reads the Tribune till dinner, sitting in a corner with his back to those who enter. Goes to his boarding-house and dines, eats an apple or two and then in the P. M. frequently goes about the solution of some mathematical problem (having once been a schoolmaster) which often employs him a week.

Friday, April 10, 1857.

Rain. D. R.'s Shanty is about half a dozen rods S. W. of his house (which may be one hundred rods from the road), nearly between his house and barn, is 12 x 14 feet, with 7 feet posts, with common pent roof. In building it he directed the carpenter to use western boards and timbers, though some eastern

studs (spruce ?) were inserted. He had already occupied a smaller shanty at "Woodlee," about a mile S. The roof is shingled, and the sides made of matched boards, and painted a light clay color, with chocolate (?) colored blinds. Within, it is not plastered, and is open to the roof, showing the timbers and rafters, and rough boards and cross-timbers overhead, as if ready for plastering. The door is at the east end, with a small window on each side of it, a similar window on each side of the building, and one at the west end, the latter looking down the garden walk. In front of the last window is a small box stove with a funnel rising to a level with the plate, and there inserted in a small brick chimney which rests on planks. On the south side the room, against the stove, is a rude settle with a coarse cushion and pillow; on the opposite side a large low desk with some bookshelves above it; on the same side by the window, a small table covered with books; and in the N. E. corner, behind the door, an old-fashioned secretary, its pigeonholes stuffed with papers. On the opposite side as you enter is a place for fuel, which the boy leaves each morning, a place to hang greatcoats. There were two small pieces of carpet on the floor, and R. or one of his guests swept out the Shanty each morning. There was a small kitchen clock hanging in the S. W. corner, and a map of Bristol County behind the settle. The west and N. W. side is well-nigh covered with slips of paper on which are written some sentences or paragraphs from R.'s favorite books. I noticed

among the most characteristic Dibdin's "Tom Tackle," a translation of Anacreon's Cicada, lines celebrating tobacco, Milton's "How charming is divine philosophy," &c., "Inveni requiem; Spes et Fortuna valete: Nil mihi vobiscum est: laudite nunc alios." (Is it Petrarch?) This is also over the door, "Mors pallida æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas regumque turres." Some lines of his own in memory of A. J. Downing, "Not to be in a hurry," over the desk, and many other quotations, celebrating retirement, country life, simplicity, humanity, sincerity, &c., &c., from Cowper and other English poets, and similar extracts from newspapers. There were also two or three advertisements of cattle-show exhibitions, and the warning not to kill birds contrary to laws, he being one of the subscribers notified to enforce the act, an advertisement of a steamboat on Lake Winnepiseogee, &c., cards of his business friends. The size of different brains, from "Hall's Journal of Health," and "Take the world Easy." A sheet of blotting paper tacked up, and of Chinese characters from a tea-chest. Also a few small pictures and pencil sketches, the latter commonly caricatures of his visitors or friends, as "The Trojan" (Channing) and Van Beest; I take the most notice of these particulars because his peculiarities are so commonly unaffected. He has long been accustomed to put these scraps on his walls, and has a basket full somewhere saved from the old Shanty, though there were some quotations which had no right there. I

THE SHANTY AT BROOKLAWN

found all his peculiarities faithfully expressed, his humanity, his fear of death, love of retirement, simplicity, &c. The more characteristic books were Bradley's Husbandry, Drake's Indians, Barber's Hist. Coll., Zimmermann on Solitude, Bigelow's Plants of Boston, &c., Farmer's Register of the first Settlers of New England, Marshall's Gardening, Vick's Gardener, John Woolman, The Modern Horse Doctor, Downing's Fruits, &c., The Farmer's Library, Walden, Dymond's Essays, Jobb Scott's Journal, Morton's Memorial, Bailey's Dictionary, Downing's Landscape Gardening, etc., The Task, Nuttall's Ornithology, Morse's Gazetteer, The Domestic Practice of Hydropathy, John Buncle, Dwight's Travels, Virgil, Young's Night Thoughts, History of Plymouth, and other Shanty books.

There was an old gun, hardly safe to fire, said to be loaded with an inextractable charge, and also an old sword over the door; also a tin sign, "D. Ricketson's office" (he having set up for a lawyer once), and a small crumpled horn; there I counted more than 20 rustic canes scattered about, a dozen or 15 pipes of various patterns (mostly the common), two spy-glasses, an open paper of tobacco, an Indian's jaw (dug up), a stuffed Bluejay, and Pine Grosbeak, and a rude Indian stone hatchet, &c., &c. There was a box with fifteen or twenty knives, mostly very large old-fashioned jack-knives, kept for curiosity, occasionally giving one to a boy or friend. A large book full of pencil sketches, "to be inspected by whomsomever," containing mostly sketches of his

friends, &c., acquaintances, and himself, of wayfaring men whom he had met, Quakers, &c., &c., and now and then a verse under fence rail, or an old-fashioned house sketched on a peculiar pea-green paper. A pail of water stands behind the door, with a peculiar tin cup for drinking, made in France.

Mon., Apr. 13th, 1857.

To Middleboro Ponds. There was no boat on Little Quittacus, so we could not explore it. Set out to walk around it, but the water being high (higher than anciently, even, on account of dams), we had to go round a swamp at the south end about Joe's rocks, and R. gave it up. I went to Long Pond and waited for him. Saw a strange turtle, much like a small snapping turtle or very large *Sternotherus odoratus* (?), crawling slowly along the bottom next the shore; poked it ashore with a stick; it had a peculiarly square snout, and hinges to the sternum, and both parts movable; was very sluggish, would not snap or bite, looked old, being mossy close on the edges, and the scales greenish and eaten beneath, the flesh slate colored. I saw it was new, and wished to bring it away, but had no paper to wrap it in; so I peeled a white birch, getting a piece of bark about ten inches long. Noticed that the birch sap was flowing. This bark at once curled back so as to present its yellow side outward. I rolled it about the turtle and folded the ends back, and tied it round with a strip of birch bark, making a very nice and airy box for the occasion, which would

not be injured by moisture, far better than any paper, and so brought it home to Concord at last. As my coat hung in R.'s shanty, over a barrel of papers, the morning that I came away the turtle made a little noise, scratching the birch bark in my pocket. R. observed, "There is a mouse in that barrel; what would you do about it?" "Oh, let him alone," said I, "he 'll get out directly." "They often get among my papers," he added. "I guess I 'd better set the barrel outdoors." I did not explain, and perhaps he experimented in the barrel after my departure.

[Note. This might appear like a practical joke, but we are inclined to think it was out of consideration for Father's sensitiveness regarding all dumb animals that Mr. Thoreau kept him "in the dark" as to his specimen, fearing he might be disturbed. — EDITORS.]

May 24th, 1857.

RICKETSON AT THOREAU'S.

At 3 P. M. Thermometer at 88 deg. It soon gets to be quite hazy. Apples out. Heard one speak to-day of his sense of awe at the thought of God, and suggested to him that awe was the cause of the potato rot. The same speaker dwelt on the sufferings of life, but my advice was to go about one's business, suggesting that no ecstasy was ever attempted as its fruit blasted. As for completeness and roundness, to be sure, we are each like one of the *laciniæ* of a lichen, a torn fragment, but not the

less cheerfully we expand in a radiant day and assume unexpected colors. We want not completeness but intensity of life. Hear the first cricket as I go through a warm bottom, bringing round the summer with his everlasting strain.

XIII

POEMS BY DANIEL RICKETSON

POEMS BY DANIEL RICKETSON

In regard to my own poems, I confess almost a culpable neglect in not having made the architecture of verse more of a study; and the more so, as I have a high regard for the great masters of rhythm; but a certain sort of impatience of rules has ever been in the way of my obtaining an accomplishment in that all important knowledge to a good and successful writer of verse, the *ars poetæ*. I am aware that my sphere is by no means a broad one, that I am deficient in imagery and felicity of expression; and were it not from a consciousness that I have taken my inspiration from Nature, with whom more than with aught else I have been conversant from my early youth, and have passed more hours in her society than in any other, I should without hesitation decide that I had no claim to be classed as a poet, even of the humblest class; but knowing this fact, and that my sweetest and happiest hours have ever been when among my favorite haunts in field or wood, by lake, river, or dancing rivulet, or where old ocean rolls his crested waves upon our coast, alone or in congenial company, I am led at times to think I may have caught and made record of things which are really true, noble, and beautiful; and that therefore I have not failed altogether in producing

that which to the not over-critical, and yet such as are truly lovers of Nature and poetry, pictures rural life and scenery, which may give pleasure to others by recalling similar experiences sacred in memory.

And in another sphere, if I may have, as I sincerely hope, reached in sympathy the lowly in life or the wounded in spirit, I shall have attained the full measure of my own critical estimate of my productions.

The Shanty, 5 P. M., Sept. 28th, 1872.

THE POET'S SANCTUARY.

Oh, 't is an humble, rustic place enough,
O'ergrown with rambling vines e'en to the vane
Upon its lowly front: O'ertopping all,
A single shoot waves to the passing breeze.
The little chimney at the farther end
Is also mantled with its robe of green;
And e'en the roof and sides receive their share,
So that the whole appears more like a nest
Or rustic hut, or more, perhaps, a nook
Where some old monk might find a studious ease,
Afar from haunts of men; where, undisturbed,
His daily prayers at morning and at eve
Might rise to Heaven; and meditation
Take the place of worldly care. So that
A sweet tranquillity might keep his soul,
And thus run out the sands of mortal life,
While, unknown to the bustling world around,
His soul would find a sure and easy way
Into those realms of peace beyond the grave.

Louisa Sampson (Mrs. Daniel Ricketson), Æt. 20, *from oil portrait by W. A. Wall*

Daniel Ricketson, Æt. 25

A far unworthier occupant is there, —
A poor and restless spirit, often sad
And buffeted by fierce besetting sins,
Causing him sharp remorse and bitter hours
Of deep contrition. Ah, how little knows
The world around how deep a tragedy
Is oft enacted where all seems at peace!
Still waters run the deepest. Often, too,
Within the breast of him appearing calm
A tempest rages, tearing at the roots
Of his own heart-strings, causing death and gloom.
Envy him not, thou son of daily toil,
For hours of leisure, rarely, too rarely,
Productive of happiness. Let this pass
But for a picture of sweet rural cast,
The little domicile is scarce surpassed,
Mantled in vines, and sheltered at the east
And north by thickly planted pines and shrubs
That shed their fragrance on the air around.
Here, too, in years long passed, my worthy friend,
Known for thy wisdom, thou didst love to come
From thy dear home beside old Concord's stream,
And hold long converse on our favorite theme,
Nature's rich products of the field and wood;
The rarest plants, and birds of sweetest song;
The ways of rural life, and that simplicity
That marked the more Arcadian days
Our fathers knew, — the days of homely fare
And homespun cloth, of sanded floors,
And great wood fires, and simple cookery.
But oft on higher themes each spoke or mused;
Of man, who in his serious hours observes
The laws controlling life, that when obeyed,
Bring harmony where else is only ill.
A man of great adventure was my friend,

Though calm as well befits a wise, good man;
Long journeys had he made on foot, through scenes
Far from the route of fashionable life,
And found rare interest, bringing oft to light
Old scenes and histories long forgotten,
Making what was before of no account,
Almost as vivid as a rare romance;
Such is the power that flows from gifted minds.

1874.

THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

A PLAIN, old-fashioned country house
Was that where I was born,
Built by my grandsire in his prime,
A hundred years agone.

As story goes, the trees were felled
Upon the very spot,
From which its sturdy frame was hewed,
E'en now unharmed by rot,

But fresh and strong as on the day
The huge oak beams were raised,
And hence another hundred years
By poet may be praised.

The massive chimney, built of brick,
With heavy stone foundation,
Suggested heaping piles of wood,
And heaping stock of ration:

The deep, broad kitchen fireplace,
With oven in its back,

And o'er its high-raised mantelpiece,
The queer old roasting-jack:

While in the garret, far above,
A wheel and rope were found,
By which the meat upon the spit
Was slowly turned around.

The floor of pine, so nice and clean,
And freshly sanded o'er,
The great high settle ranged along,
Between the fire and door,

Bespoke of comfort and good cheer,
In those rare days of old,
While far around, the blazing hearth
Kept off the winter's cold.

How cracked the wood upon the fire,
In ample armfuls thrown!
And roaring up the chimney flue,
Made music of its own.

A broadened circle thus was made,
As all sat round the fire, —
The serving-maid, and serving-man,
Granddame, and child, and sire.

The grandsire smoked his long-stemmed pipe
Within his corner snug,
While on the hearth the apples hummed,
And eke the cider mug.

The granddame on the other side,
With knitting-work in hand;

The tallow candles, nicely dipped,
Upon the ancient stand,

Where oft the open Bible lay,
Or book of early Friend,
Whose honest pages lure me still,
And sweet instruction lend:

For of that simple, Christlike faith
Our ancient household were;
And "thee" and "thou" and "thus he saith"
Evinced our Quaker sphere.

And standing near, the rustic child,
With open eyes and ears,
Enjoyed the comfort of the scene,
Nor dreamed of boding fears.

The mottled cat, so fat and sleek,
Sat purring near the stand;
The old dog stretched himself and yawned.
And licked the proffered hand.

And so the evening passed away,
The apples passed around,
The cider in the earthen mug,
And thus the day was crowned.

O peaceful days, my childhood's boon,
In memory ever dear!
And dear the plain and honest ways
That keep our lives from fear.

'T was pleasant, of a "first-day" morn,
To see the good old pair,

Together in the square-topped chaise,
With Dobbin plump and fair,

Set off for meeting far away,
Some six or seven miles;
For where the conscience guides the heart,
No trifling space beguiles.

A worthier or happier sect
Than were our ancient sires,
Are found not in the lists of fame
A grateful world admires.

And fondly still in memory's page
I keep my childhood's home,
Though many changes, sad and sore,
Upon its walls have come.

But in the ever mellowed past
All things are as before,
And forms and faces meet my gaze
As they were seen of yore.

Far back into the storied past
I peer with curious eyes,
To earlier days than those I knew,
And live 'neath earlier skies.

I still can see the broad domain,
The spacious fields and woods;
And 'mid our crowded city streets
Form sylvan solitudes;

Can see the old house, stark and lone,
Its overshading trees;

Can hear the robin's evening song,
And feel the summer breeze;

Can hear the mowers whet their scythes,
The dewy herd's grass fall,
And from the old rail fence beyond,
The quail his covey call.

My grandsire with his broad-brimmed hat,
In shirtsleeves with his men,
Stands leaning on his rake or fork,
Beside the loaded wain.

Methinks 't was fairer then than now,
That life was freer then,
And more of faith and honest cheer
Among the sons of men.

Our lineage boasts no wealth nor rank —
A simple, honest race,
Who from old England's sea-girt shores
Their Saxon offspring trace;

Who some two hundred years ago
Sought out this peaceful nook,
And o'er the broad Atlantic wave
Their native land forsook.

And here they made a pleasant home,
And here their roofs were reared,
And here, the offshoot of their toil,
Our city has appeared.

The axe rang through the grand old woods,
And laid its monarchs low:

No qualms of conscience then held back
The settler's sturdy blow:

For where was all one savage waste,
And wild men still around,
The clearings then were pleasant spots,
And dear the naked ground.

The fields of grain soon rose to view;
And soon the orchards fair,
And signs of industry and thrift
Were scattered here and there.

Along the river's pleasant banks,
How fair the landscape glowed,
When lighted by the morning sun,
Its varied beauties showed!

Here by the shore were built the ships
Which brought our early wealth;
While from the dotted farms around
Were found the stores of health.

But simple truth is still the same,
And they who love its ways
Will find its blessings still abound,
As in those early days.

1868.

PROSPECTIVE.

Oh, should my life be spared to age,
Though age bring with it pain,
May scenes that now my youth engage
Still with me then remain!

May still the landscape smile for me,
That smiles on all around,
And seated 'neath some favorite tree
As now be often found;

Whose spreading branches overhead
A canopy shall lend;
And may I feel, though youth hath sped,
Joy with my sorrow blend.

And though my limbs should need the aid
Of kindly arm, or staff,
Still may I seek the woodland shade,
The crystal streamlet quaff, —

There in the glass of memory dwell
Upon the varied past;
And if a sigh my heart should swell,
Still may the vision last!

A DIURNAL RHYME.

TIME, EVENING.

In my humble Shanty rude,
Where I pass the graceful hours,
Sweetened by sweet solitude —
The true springtime with its flowers,
Many solemn truths I learn,
That are found not in the books,
Ne'er denied to those who yearn
For them in their chosen nooks;
For primeval wisdom here
Finds me ready at her call,
And upon my listening ear

Oft her kindly whisperings fall,
Telling me in accents clear,
Known but to the ear within,
That the source of all I hear
Did with Man at first begin.
And in silence as I sit,
Calmly waiting for the power,
Knowledge to my soul doth flit
That no learning e'er could shower, —
Sempiternal wisdom deep,
From the endless source divine,
Not as creeds and dogmas creep,
But as doth the day-god shine,
With broad beams of amber light,
Reaching into every cell,
Driving out the ancient night,
That my soul in peace may dwell.
Thus I 'm taught to look and learn,
Rather calmly to receive,
And from stupid schoolmen turn,
To that which will ne'er deceive.

March, 1856.

THE WINTER EVENING.

Oh, play again that grand old tune,
Resounding far through memory's halls,
Refreshing as the breeze of June
'Mid songs of birds and waterfalls!

It takes me back to other days,
When, void of every earthly care,
I sped amid the giddy maze,
In time to that old favorite air.

How jocund passed the light-winged hours,
Where youth and beauty led the dance!
Our pathway then was strewn with flowers,
The happy season of romance.

O fairy form! O gentle heart!
Where have your light and beauty gone?
Do others now like grace impart?
Or with the past have all these flown?

Ah, no! kind Nature keeps her own,
And youth and beauty take the place
Of those from whom these gifts have gone,
And are renewed in every race;

And glowing eyes and waving hair,
The kindly voice and lovely smile,
Do still the same attractions wear,
And still the heart from pain beguile.

Rejoice, then, ye of hopeful years!
Oh, sing and dance while yet you may!
Nor let your hearts, disturbed by fears,
Look forward to a sadder day.

Strike up the old familiar air,
And let our hearts to-night rejoice;
A farewell let us give to care,
And in the song blend every voice.

Tune up, dear hearts, each tuneful throat!
It is your mother's natal day;
Her voice still with your own shall float,
As sweet as ere her hair was gray.

And though our years are gathering fast,
We will to-night be young again,
Again live o'er the sacred past,
And bid good-by to care and pain.

Blow, winter wind! we dread you not,
And spread your snow upon the ground,
While safe within our rural cot,
Among our treasures we are found.

Our cattle all are housed and fed;
The barnyard fowl have gone to rest;
Old "Billy" has his clean straw bed,
And blanket strapped across his breast.

The sheds well filled with oak and pine,
Cut from the woods a year ago;
Our household comforts all combine
To keep aloof the frost and snow.

Thanks to a kindly Father's hand,
Thanks unto Him who rules above,
Our lot is cast in this fair land,
'Mid scenes that we so dearly love.

While we forget not in our prayer
Those who to-night are on the sea,
And from our stores afford a share
To meet the claims of poverty, —

Remember still those who so late
In bonds groaned on our Southern soil,
And by the treachery of state
Are now oppressed by want and toil.

Blow, Boreas, from your ice-bound sphere,
And ring your chords among our trees;
Sound forth the wailings of the year,
Where sang so late the summer breeze.

Come, Ranger! leave the glowing hearth,
Where you so long have dreamed and slept;
The cat and kittens join in mirth;
'T is time your watch and ward were kept.

Old Ranger 'neath the dresser sneaks,
With wagging tail and upturned eye;
In vain his master sharply speaks,
For all exclaim, "Oh, let him lie!"

Yes, lie thou shalt, now stiff and old;
Naught shall subject thee to the storm;
Thou once wast like a lion bold,
Of stately port and graceful form.

So let the storm blow wildly out,
And howl and whistle at our ears;
Our social bliss will put to rout
And drive afar all idle fears.

Then heap the wood upon the fire,
And send a glow on all around!
Let all within to mirth conspire!
Let merriment to-night abound!

Ye tranquil hours, supremely blessed,
Dear to my heart, — a present heaven, —
When no rude passions stir the breast,
And all is calm as summer even!

What, then, are riches, what is fame?
The one takes wings and flies away;
The other glitters in a name,
And only lives its poor, brief day.

How sweet the boon of rural peace,
That soothes and heals the wounded heart!
May thy sweet influence never cease;
May thou and I ne'er have to part.

Dear quiet haunts, where Nature smiles,
And o'er her votary kindly flings
Her genial blessings, and beguiles
The heart that listens as she sings, —

Her song of truth and beauty tell,
And speak the great, good Giver's praise!
From mountain top to shady dell
All things the glorious anthem raise.

O mellowed days! O hallowed shrines!
Where hearts in peace together dwell;
Around which memory entwines,
And bids the soul with pleasure swell!

Ah, what were life without the power
To call to mind our happier days,
While waiting for that holier hour
When we shall join the song of praise?

Then pleasant pictures let us strive
Upon life's canvas oft to paint,
Where we again the past may live,
Though age may make them worn and faint.

With hope triumphant in the heart,
A trust that all is ordered right,
They who to others joy impart
Shall find their waning years more bright.

In chorus shout the brave old air
That hath awaked this happy vein!
Give vent to joy, farewell to care,
And yield to love's supernal reign.

1868.

MY OLD PLAID CLOAK.

My old plaid cloak! my old plaid cloak!
How many storms we've borne together!
And now though old, and faded too,
Thou still canst shield me from the weather.

And here thou art, old Tartan friend!
Again brought out to face the blast,
And ward me from rude Boreas' cold,
Faithful in duty to the last.

Yes! I have wrapped thee round my breast,
And borne the brunt of many a storm;
And well hast thou withstood the test,
But now art worn, and quaint in form;

Yet I'll not cast thee off, old friend,
Dimmed as thou art, and beauty gone;
But every rent in thee will mend,
Though thou shouldst cause the proud to scorn.

With thee my woodland walks I trace,
When mantling snow is falling fast,

And safe within thy warm embrace,
Fear naught from stern old Winter's blast.

Old Scottish plaid! thou bring'st to mind
The thought of days long past and gone,
Of happy hours, and friendship kind,
In memory blest, though erewhile flown.

Yet thou art here, my well-tried friend,
Who half a score of years hast seen,
And wilt thy share of comfort lend,
Though thou art not what thou hast been, —

A bonnie plaid, of fairest hue,
That well might win the fair one's smile,
Of Lincoln green, and Highland blue,
With purest white inmixed the while.

As on thy time-worn form I muse,
My mind is turned to Scotia's land,
When Wallace brave and gallant Bruce
In times of fear maintained command;

And fireside joys are brought to mind,
With Bonnie Doon, and Auld Lang Syne,
And Highland lads, in bran-new plaids,
Appear around thy hoary shrine.

Let who will call it weak in me,
And smile at this my humble song,
Which thus records the worth of thee,
Who hast been true to me so long, —

I cannot scorn thee, honest plaid!
If thou art old, and faded too;

For well thou hast my friendship paid,
Nor shall my muse refuse thy due.

1836.

KITCHEN MUSINGS.

I LOVE by the warm kitchen wood fire to ponder,
While thick-coming fancies envelop my mind,
And the old chimney rumbles like far distant thunder,
A trumpet alarm of the god of the wind.

The casements all rattle, and threaten to tumble;
They 've told the same tale these odd fifty years:
I heed it no more than old Boreas' grumble;
To the chicken-heart only it brings any fears.

Let all those who wish sit ensconced in the parlor;
In vain they attempt their gloom to deceive;
I rather would hum some old song of Kit Marlow
By the warm kitchen wood fire on a cold winter's eve.

Oh, the old kitchen hearth, the charm of my childhood!
With fondness I hold to its generous heat;
It tells me of tales in the night-shrouded wildwood,
And youthful emotions my fancy still greet, —

When entranced I sat by the warm glowing embers,
And listened with tears to some heart-touching tale,
Which with fond cherished love my heart still remembers,
For innocence then did o'er it prevail.

The simplest of pleasures are surely the sweetest,
And those which will bring best good to the mind,
And though we deplore they so often prove fleetest,
We look with fond hope to those left behind.

1838.

A WISH.

Take me where Nature spreads around
Her ample store of woods and fields,
When in the vale of years I 'm found,
Ere the last hope of pleasure yields.

For so I 've loved the quiet haunts
Where Poesy makes her holy shrine,
That death himself could scarcely daunt,
When 'mid her scenes, this soul of mine.

1840.

THE FALLEN WOOD.

Ye brave old woods, farewell! who have so long
Spread your huge branches to the wintry wind,
Or waved your leafy tops 'neath summer's breeze;
Within whose still retreats the gentle band
Of Nature's choristers has nestled oft,
And hatched their young, and sung their mellow chants.
Farewell! the woodman's axe hath laid ye low,
And soon upon some sturdy yeoman's hearth,
Or that of well-fed citizen, ye 'll blaze.
No more by eager fancy borne along,
Far from the cares that crowd the haunts of man,
Shall I commune within your quiet walks,
Which seemed so hidden from the glare of day,
That ages might have passed you undisturbed.
But the all-grasping hand of gain hath found you,
And ye have fallen. That aged raven,
Sweeping his lonely way o'er your sad ruins,
In vain seeks out his once sequestered nest,
And boding omens sad, sends forth his tale
Of sorrow. Where is the heart that cannot feel

A pain to see fair Nature thus disrobed?
So it was not meant — God lends the leafy grove,
And the grand influence of the forest wild,
To calm our worldly nature, and to tranquillize
The troubled waters of the harassed soul.
But man, not heeding Nature's kindly boon,
Blots her fair face, and treats her oft with scorn.
The pleasant Spring has come, and o'er your haunts
Casts its broad smile. An effort yet for life
You make, and from your sad and mutilated stumps
Shoots forth the juicy twig. But years must pass,
The yet unwrinkled brow must droop with age,
Those limbs now strong and in the flush of youth
Must shrink and weaken 'neath the hand of time,
Or moulder in the cold damp vault of earth,
Ere ye shall rear your lordly heads again.
Methinks yon warbler by his saddened note
Laments your fate, and in his soft complaint
Would call unfeeling man to his hard lot.
Man is a destroyer! before whose might
The lofty forests fall — earth, sky, and water,
All must yield to him — for so the word is written.
"Deep calleth unto deep," and oft within
The far recesses of the solemn wood,
A voice like that which at Creation's birth
Spread o'er the forming world, may then be heard;
And to the soul so clear, so deep it comes,
That man might deem the great Jehovah spake,
Prompting his wayward thoughts to look above,
And lost in wonder, worship and adore.
Then let the groves remain! sacred to thought,
To purity, to health, and sweet devotion;
Where rural worshipper may steal away,
Far from the jarring world where Mammon reigns,
That world which oft has caused his heart to mourn,

And droop with sadness ; here let him come,
And pour out the full tide of his feelings
In free communion with the God of all.
Here in her beauty let the maiden come,
Blushing to hear the low repeated vows
Of him for whom she lives. What fitter place
For pure congenial hearts to sympathize?
The man of sorrow, too, may linger here,
And in the solemn stillness of these scenes
Find a sure balm to heal his wounded heart,
And bid him think that life may yet be blessed.
Spare, then, the grand old woods, the pleasant groves,
And delve the earth, — there borrow from the mine
The sulphurous lump to cheer the winter hearth.

1839.

LINES.

The bard who does not rise above
The low and commonplace of life,
Whose highest efforts only prove
A level with his daily strife,
But slender title to the name
Of poet or of seer can claim.
His lines may flow in mellow verse,
His periods rounded off and terse ;
But wanting Nature's magic grace, —
A few short years shall all efface.

December, 1854.

WINTER EVENING.

The snow falls on my shanty roof,
And fiercely drives against the door ;
But my warm fire keeps harm aloof,
And flickers on the hard-pine floor.

Flickers upon the boards and beams
That form my humble rustic dome,
Where flies enjoy their winter dreams,
And wasps and spiders find a home.

Companions of my solitude,
Ye 're welcome to your chosen nooks
In this my habitation rude;
Ye never on my peace intrude,
But leave me to my thoughts and books.

So let the storm beat loud without,
If only peace may rule within;
All harping ills I 'll put to rout,
And deem my solitude no sin.

1858.

THE CHICKADEE.

Thou little black-cap, chirping at my door,
And then saluting with thy gentle song
Or lonely whistle my attentive ear,
A hearty welcome would I give to thee,
Thou teacher blest of quietness and peace,
Sweet minister of love for hearts awake
To the rare minstrelsy of field and wood.
Thou constant friend! I hail thee with delight,
Who at this season of rude Winter's reign,
When all the cheerful Summer birds are fled,
Dost still remain to cheer the heart of man!
And though in numbers few thy song is given,
Two tranquil notes alone thy fullest song,
Yet scarcely when the joyous year brings back
The swelling choir of various notes once more,
Have I found deeper or more welcome strains;

For when all Nature glows with life again,
When hills and dales put on their vernal gear,
When gentle wildflowers burst upon our gaze,
With all the exultation of the year,
Our souls, unequal to the heavenly boon,
Are often overwhelmed; and in the attempt
To enjoy it all, drop listless and confused.
But at the close of these sweet sights and sounds,
This grand display of God's enriching power,
The trees all bare, and nature's russet stole
Thrown o'er the landscape, chill must be the heart,
Ingrate to Him who rules the perfect year,
That is not gladdened by thy gentle song.

1859.

THE THUNDERSTORM.

Oh, there is something in the thunder's peal,
When bursting from their shroud the lightnings dart,
That to my mind more than aught else reveals
The great Jehovah — the Almighty God.
Naught of the earth in her sublimest scenes,
Such clear, such open evidence displays,
Of a great Ruler — one Omnipotent.
The broad expanse of ocean, from whose realms,
Mysterious, dark and fathomless abodes,
Grace, grandeur, and infinity are felt,
The mighty cataract, with thundering voice
Deafening the ear, the towering mountain's peak
Unfold to view, and in a language strong
Speak of the Almighty Hand that formed them all;
But faint indeed to the tremendous voice
Which the trembling earth is called to hear,
When, from his great pavilion in the skies,
He causes such terrific fires to glow.

Oh, it doth seem, with each repeated shock,
As though His sovereign presence was revealed
Within the open veil — there riding safe
Upon his radiant car, careering through the skies.

1860.

THE SAXON HEART.

The Saxon heart bears not control;
Like a strong river on its course,
The tide swells on within the soul,
O'erpowering every adverse force.

The brave, good heart, that takes its stand,
Resisting wrong, defying shame,
Born like a prince to take command,
Regardless still of praise or blame, —

The matchless heart of bold emprise,
The conquering heart, the heart so strong,
The heart of heroes, brave and wise,
The heart that always rights the wrong.

The race that erst, in forest drear,
The deadly arrow swiftly sped,
Hath dropt the winged shaft and spear,
And wields the winged thought instead.

The race that once went bravely forth
To beard the wild boar in his den,
Now meets the tyrant in his wrath,
And boldly claims the right of men.

As in those Saxon days of old
The bow-string echoed far and wide,

The words of truth ring out like gold,
The same old spirit sanctified.

The race whence valiant Luther sprung —
The modern herald of the cross,
Whose words throughout the world have rung,
And cleared religion of its dross —

Spake out in honest Fox and Penn,
Inspired a Wesley's fervent heart,
Moved Sidney for the rights of men,
And Vane to take the freeman's part, —

The race that on the battlefield
Opposed the tyranny of kings,
Like Hampden, ready life to yield,
Believing more in men than things,

And in our day still battles wrong,
Believing still in knightly deed,
And finds in Phillips' classic tongue
A voice the bondman's claim to plead.

1860.

OLD ENGLAND.

Home of my fathers long, long years ago,
I feel for thee a strong and filial love,
And next to my own beloved native land,
Prize thee above the nations of the earth.
I know that thou hast many blots upon
Thy shield, and cruel art at times, whene'er
Thy rule is forced upon its victims;
Through blood I know that thou hast risen high
In glory, by the scale of nations; still,

For the great and good spirits thou hast borne,
I love thee. Land of Howard, Wilberforce,
And "Nature's darling," the true Christian bard,
The gentle Cowper, dear to every heart
Attuned to truth and virtue's lovely haunts;
And in these later days, and our own time,
The much-loved home of Wordsworth, Coleridge,
And Southey, unto whom I owe so much; —
For these, and many more of ancient time,
As well as modern, do I entertain
For thee, O sea-girt isle, an affection;
And in earlier years, through thy inspired bards,
A strong desire, as yet unrealized,
To visit thy fair realms, and wander o'er
Thy scenes historic, see the homes and haunts
Of those whose works have ever been to me
Friends and companions in the walk of life.
How dear indeed the spot that rendered birth
To ye, dear Sons of Poetry divine,
Scattered all o'er thy soil, Britannia,
And through the Cambrian and the Scotian hills,
And o'er green Erin. Oft in thought I go
Through gray old abbeys and crumbling castle walls,
Mantled with ivy, beauteous in decay,
And dwell on themes found in historic page; —
A thousand years ago, when mailed knights
Rode forth on errands to the farthest east,
Or met in tournament with shield and lance.
But scenes of modern time delight me more,
And oft I trace with reverential steps
The haunts of Cowper, portrayed in his Task;
Visit his garden and his summer-house,
His walks at Olney by the banks of Ouse,
The woods of Weston, Sir John Throckmorton's grounds,

The "Wilderness," the "Lime Walk," and the "Chase,"
Where stands the Yardley oak, renowned in verse;
Seen in the distance, Olney's tapering spire,
And Emberton's square tower with chime of bells,
That so much charmed the poet's listening ear;
The "Hall," where Cowper met his "Lady Frog"
And "Catharina," patrons of his muse,
And constant friends until the poet's death, —
These, and the like, would tempt my wandering steps
From scenes of fashion and from prouder sights.
The bard of Avon, too, would claim my love,
And with delighted steps I stray along
The village street to Charlecote's fair woods,
Where story says the poet purloined deer
When in the heyday of his roystering youth,
And was arraigned before the angry Squire;
Thence to the church where rest his honored bones,
Yet undisturbed, as was the poet's wish,
And curse pronounced on the offender's head; —
Forgetting not upon my pilgrimage
The "Leasowes," Shenstone's rural seat,
Drummond of Hawthornden, and banks of Ayr,
Renowned as the ploughman-poet's home,
The land of Burns, endeared to every muse.
Thus would I wander through our Fatherland,
'Mid scenes endeared to virtue and to truth,
The homes of godlike genius, that have kept
Their land from sinking 'neath a barbarous sway.
Far greater than her warriors, men of blood,
Her Marlborough or Wellington, I deem
Her sons of song, such as glorious Milton,
The bard of Olney, and of Rydal Mount,
And Tennyson of our own time, whose verse,
Though often shaded by a sombre muse,
Still rises with the great harmonic chant,

From Chaucer's keynote of old English verse
Down to the present day of choral song.

1866.

NATURE AND HUMANITY.

I COULD not listen to the robin's song,
Nor bluebird's warble in the vernal year
Could see no charm that to the flowers belong,
If to humanity I closed my ear.

My darling Nature would revert her face,
The fields, the woods, no more would lend their charm
If silently I should my soul disgrace,
Nor strive to save the suffering poor from harm.

Only in sympathy with human woe,
Nor wanting sympathy for brute distress,
Can in our hearts the tender passions flow,
Prepare our souls the God of love to bless.

So far away from pomp and pride I roam,
Where humble virtue finds its best retreat,
To some poor laborer's peaceful, low-roofed home,
With words of cheer or sympathy to greet.

THE OLD BARN.

No hay upon its wide-spread mows,
No horses in the stalls,
No broad-horned oxen, sheep, or cows,
Within its time-worn walls;

The wind howls through its shattered doors,
Now swinging to and fro;

And o'er its once frequented floors
No footsteps come or go.

Oh, once, alas! each vacant bay,
And every space around,
Was teeming with sweet-scented hay,
The harvest of the ground;

And well-fed cattle in a row,
At mangers ranged along,
Each fastened by an oaken bow,
Stood at the stanchions strong.

But where so long old Dobbin stood,
His master's pride and care,
And from whose hand received his food,
All now is vacant there.

Then these broad fields, from hill to plain,
Waved in the summer air
With choicest crops of grass or grain,
Now left so bleak and bare;

The swallows chattered all day long,
As they flew out and in,
While from their nests on high, the young
Kept up a constant din;

The blackbird hailed the dewy morn
From out his rushy perch;
The sparrow sang upon the thorn,
The catbird on the birch;

The robin from the highest tree
Sent forth his whistle clear,

His soul partaking of the glee
That wakes the vernal year;

And childhood's merry shout was heard,
The farmyard choir among,
Which, mingled with the note of bird,
Enriched the tide of song;

The lilies bloomed upon the pond,
Amid the meadows gay,
And scented all the air around,
Throughout the summer day.

A pleasant sight it was to see
The great hay-loaded wain,
With youthful rustics in their glee,
Come down the rural lane, —

The oxen's backs half covered o'er
With locks of fragrant clover,
The farmer's precious winter store,
When sterner toils are over.

And when the autumn days had come,
And loudly piped the jay, —
The cheery days of harvest-home,
The crops all stored away, —

A happy scene then, the old barn;
A joy to young and old
To strip the yellow shining corn,
The farmer's ready gold.

The merry jokes around would crack,
And merry peals of laughter

The old walls gratefully sent back,
And every beam and rafter.

How sweet the music of the flail,
Resounding far and clear,
As borne upon the passing gale
It reached the distant ear!

The master on his daily round
With conscious pride would go,
His faithful dog close by him found,
Attending to and fro.

Old honest Trip long since has gone,
And moulders 'neath the wall;
No more he takes the welcome bone,
Or hears his master's call.

The kindly master, too, has died,
The matron in her grace;
And dead, or scattered far and wide,
The remnant of their race.

But peace and blessings on the past,
The poet now would say;
Our joy cannot forever last,
Nor sorrow ever stay.

1867.

THE DEATH OF JACOB.

'T WAS noon in Egypt, and the scorching sun
Poured down his sultry heat on Jacob's tent;
No noise disturbed the holy calm around,
Save when at times the buzzing harvest-fly

Spun his long note, or far-off bleat of flocks
Came slowly stealing through the burning air.
The feeble breeze was scarcely heard to stir
The ancient palm that stood beside the door;
And the sweet flowers, that to the morning smiled,
Hung down their heads and closed their drooping leaves.
The flocks and shepherds sought a refuge safe,
In cool retreats among the mountain groves.
The fallen sheaves lay withering in the sun,
While the exhausted reapers slept beneath
The spreading branches of the shady trees.
Within the tent where aged Jacob dwelt,
Stood Joseph, and near by two youthful forms,
His sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who
With weeping eyes looked at the dying sage.
Upon a lowly couch the old man lay,
His long white beard hanging o'er his bosom,
And his feeble eye turned toward heaven.
Raising himself upon his pilgrim-staff,
He lifted up his voice to God, and asked
Of Heaven a blessing for the youthful swains.
His prayer was heard, and like their godly sire,
They lived, and died, in service of the Lord.
The sun went down behind the distant hills,
And his bright beams had scarcely left the skies,
When good old Jacob sank upon his couch.
He died, as all of us might wish to die,
With a firm hope and confidential trust.

1837.

SONNET — CHARLES LAMB.

How gloriously around thy cherished name
The gentle graces of thy soul are wreathed!
Each passing thought, or word but by thee breathed,
Is now recorded with thy lustrous fame.

Oh, happy they who had thee for a friend,
With whom thou fondly didst thy humor share,
And who as with one voice thy worth declare,
And aye with sorrow o'er thy ashes bend;
For thou possessed a spirit rich and rare,
Which lasted to the evening of thy days,
As sunlight round some sparkling fountain plays;
And what of all most genial can combine,
This, gentle "Elia," was truly thine.
1838.

NEW YORK.

O COMPLICATION of all evil,
And complication of all good;
Where thousands worship but the Devil,
And thousands also worship God!
O wretchedness beyond compare!
O filth and rags, and stagnant air!
O glittering wealth and poverty,
And rosy health and misery!
The palace and the hovel vie
To take the palm of victory.
Centre of all that 's good and bad,
Of all that 's cheerful, all that 's sad!
May God in mercy spare the best,
And in his wisdom purge the rest!
1867.

THE NEW YORK DUSTMAN'S BELLS.

OF all comical sounds in heaven or earth,
A combination of sadness and mirth,
There 's nothing to my imagining tells
More wonderful tales than the dustman's bells,
As wrangling, jangling, to and fro,
Their notes are heard wherever you go.

Witches and goblins fill the air;
Oaths and curses mingle with prayer;
From gutter to eaves, and very house-top,
Such queer looking people I fancy may pop, —
As wrangling, jangling, to and fro,
Their notes are heard wherever you go.

The ghosts of old Dutchmen long hidden appear,
With their "donder und blitzen," "mein Gott," and "mynheer;"
And 'mid the strange bluster, and jostle, and jam,
Our "Gotham" is lost in "New Amsterdam," —
As wrangling, jangling, to and fro,
Their notes are heard wherever you go.

For among these old rags and fragments so packed,
From many a garret and cellar ransacked,
Are bits of old garments a century old,
That marvellous bits of old history unfold, —
As wrangling, jangling, to and fro,
Their notes are heard wherever you go.

And not unmusical, too, are these bells,
Reminding the ear of pastoral dells, —
Of scenes far away in the country so dear,
Where there 's nothing from want and wrong to fear,
As wrangling, jangling, to and fro,
Their notes are heard wherever you go.

Ring on! ring on! ye quaint old bells,
And rouse each house with your constant knells;
But rarely, I fancy, shall rhymer like me
Find in your rude notes such weird minstrelsy,
As wrangling, jangling, to and fro,
Their notes are heard wherever you go.

1867.

THE WORLD AS WE MAKE IT.

The world is just as we make it, —
If I 'm crabbed, and cold, and hard,
All things will wear the same aspect,
And from whate'er is good I 'm debarred.
But if I am calm, good, and sunny,
And meet every one with a smile,
Like Plato's, my lips shall yield honey,
Like Woolman's, my heart void of guile.

1871.

HOPE.

O Hope! delightful hope! how much I owe
To thee, thou true inspirer of our highest joy.
When nature in her wintry garb is clad,
And all around seems in deep sympathy
With whatsoe'er would add its special gloom,
Then thou, kind helper, bring'st thy ready aid,
And cheerful thoughts of springtime fill the heart.
Again we see the landscape clothed in green,
The woods again resume their leafy crown,
The flowers we love so much again spring up,
And the sweet songsters chant at morn and eve.
'T is pleasant in winter's milder days
To seek the sunny side of some old wood,
Or 'neath the shelter of a moss-clad wall,
Where naught disturbs, to sit and muse awhile.
How much of what we call the ills of life
May we escape who seek these simple joys!
As I look back on my much lengthened life,
A sense of gratitude arises in my heart,
For the calm pleasures of my rural haunts.

And now in these my winter days of life
I calmly contemplate the closing scene,
Which through the goodness of the King of all,
I humbly pray may be in some sweet place.

1887.

MY BOON.

No invitation to the classic seat have I,
No publisher my humble wares would buy,
No reader for my latest effort waits,
Nor cottage opes to me its golden gates;
Yet Nature to my rustic muse is free,
At large I roam beneath her canopy.
The sky is mine, the stars forever true,
The ocean with its boundless realm of blue,
The woods, the fields, the rocks, the joyous rills,
My simple taste with pleasure ever fills: —
With grateful heart to God I render praise,
And thus in peace will hope to end my days.

Dec. 18, 1885.

THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

In the lone visions of the night,
In quiet hours by day,
I 've felt the presence of His might
To shine upon my way.

In silent walks through field and wood,
Or by the babbling stream,
I too have felt the Wise and Good
Along my pathway gleam.

In quiet, meditative hours,
His presence has appeared,

With song of birds and new-born flowers,
In memory so endeared.

And often on my evening strolls,
Beneath the starry skies,
I 've felt the Power that all controls
With welcome and surprise.

Thus may my soul be ever found
Attentive to His call;
And sacred ever be the ground
Where'er His light may fall.

Nov. 24th, 1884.

RECEPTION.

When I walk forth and view the grand display
Of moon and stars in the great realm above,
Or when I walk beneath the God of Day,
And listen to the melody of field and grove,
Or see the wild-flower on its slender stalk,
And other objects fair that greet my walk,
Must I in all my admiration pause,
And seek to comprehend great Nature's laws?
Still in my knowledge I would be a child,
And feel the beauty of the forest wild;
The gentle influence of the field and wood,
The sweetness of fair Nature's solitude,
Rather than waste o'er theories and rules,
The products of our scientific schools.

1871.

ASPIRATIONS.

Oh, in the life that is to come, may I,
Dear Father, all redeemed by thee from sin,
Not only meet those dear by Nature's ties,

The cherished household band, but also see
Those unto whom my heart so fondly clings,
Whose glorious works have wrought upon my soul
Such happiness from early youth to age!
And first, my much loved Cowper, teacher dear
In wisdom's ways and Nature's fair domains,
Thou gentle spirit unto whom I owe
A debt of gratitude deep and sincere,
For hours of pleasure and instruction wise.
How oft with thee upon my rural walks
Have I in sweet communion strolled along
Through fields and woods, or by some murmuring stream,
And felt thy genial sway, O Poesy,
Pervade my mind, enriching all around!
The solemn muse of Young, leading the soul
To look beyond the things of earth to Him
Who ruleth all things by his sovereign will;
And tuneful Gray, so mellow and so rich,
Shedding o'er nature a transcendent calm;
Thomson, whom early too I learned to love,
And from his Seasons drew a fresh delight;
Then dear Beattie, with his minstrel harp,
And moral lessons told in graceful verse;
And coming down to still more modern days,
Our own rich Wordsworth, simple, and yet deep
In that philosophy which bears aloft
The humblest objects, and enjoins on man
The recognition of her royal truths;
And over all great Milton, master of
The lyre, whether its chords resound of life
Or death, or chant of sweet Arcadian scenes, —
Perfect in all, and gracefully sublime.
For such companionship my soul aspires
In that blessed land, where peace and virtue reign.
Ask I too much? Oh, let me then prepare,

By close observance of the heavenly law,
And drinking oft at Siloam's holy fount
The cleansing waters, and by grace Divine
Washed of all stain, to meet the heavenly host
The great and good who once dwelt on the earth.
And may I not, dear Father, hope that thou
Wilt hear my prayer for this thy benison,
That while on earth my best companionship
Hath been among the good, so that in heaven
I may renew and add to my erewhile
Friends, such as I have ever found to be,
Whether among the living or the dead,
Congenial to my soul? And thus shall heaven
Prove the great fulfilment of my best hopes;
And there, perhaps, my humble rural muse,
By Thy permission graciously vouchsafed,
May join in singing praises unto Thee,
Who out of chaos wrought Thy wondrous works.

1868.

A WISH.

When to its final rest my form is borne,
In all simplicity let it be done.
The few that may remain, the cherished few,
Whom I have loved, and found their love returned,
These only would I have at the last scene.
With no adornment for my humble mound,
No published eulogy with falsehood rife,
No ministerial form, nor solemn woe,
But gently let me pass beyond this life,
To that broad realm, unknown to man while here.

1877.

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